POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

FREDERIC II.

KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. X.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND THE

MARQUIS D'ARGENS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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LETTER I.

From the Marquis d'Argens.*

SIRE, Liege, July 1, 1747.

I HAVE delayed writing to your majeſty for two or three days, that I might give you a circumſtantial account of every thing which has happened to me, from the moment I left the army to repair to Liege, and rejoin my travelling companion, thence to continue my route for Paris, through Bruſſels.

* I have rather choſen to write the Marquis d'Argens than the Marquis of Argens, becauſe the name written after the firſt manner is ſo well known. T.

Not receiving my paſſports at Weſel, after having waited five days for them, I ſet off for Aix la Chapelle, where I had ſcarcely arrived before they were brought me, by expreſs, ſent by the marſhal von Doſſow.

From Aix la Chapelle I went to Liege, with an eſcort of ten men, granted me by the Auſtrians; the eſcort came from the camp to meet me at Aix. On my arrival at Liege, I left Marianne there, and proceeded with an eſcort to the camp. I addreſſed myſelf on the very ſame day to M. de Puiſieux, miniſter for foreign affairs, who treated me with great politeneſs, and ſo continued to treat me, while I remained with the army. On the morrow he preſented me to the king, who received me very graciouſly. He began to laugh when he ſaw me, and ſaid, in rather a loud tone, to M. de Puiſieux—"How much he reſembles his brother!"—He next made inquiry concerning the health of your majeſty, aſked when I left Berlin, &c.

The day that I was preſented to the king I dined with marſhal Saxe; on the morrow with the duc de Richelieu; on the next day with M. d'Argenſon, miniſter for the war department; and yeſterday with M. de Puiſieux. To-day, the ſixth after my arrival, I left the army

and

and have the honour to write to your majeſty now from Liege.

The king commanded a paſſport to be given me, which he ſigned with his own hand; and I have an order from the miniſter to have an eſcort as far as Bruſſels. Every poſſible juſtice has been promiſed me, relative to my affairs; in fine, every thing is in good train, except the preſent, which I ſhall not receive till M. de Puiſieux ſhall firſt have ſpoken to M. de Chambrier; and it is likewiſe neceſſary, on this occaſion, for your majeſty to inform the latter what is your will. The following is the explanation of this enigma.

The good Valory, who cordially hates me, I know not why, has had the kindneſs to write that the preſent, which the king ſhould make, muſt not be given to me, I being only the bearer of your majeſty's letter *by accident*, but to the equerry who brought the horſes. On this, when I departed, M. de Puiſieux ſpoke to me with great frankneſs, and told me he was under much embarraſſment; that, on one ſide, he perceived, I being the bearer of your majeſty's letter, your intention apparently was that the preſent ſhould be given to me; but that, on the other, he likewiſe perceived M. von Schwerin had brought the horſes; and that, being

thus in doubt, he ſhould be glad of a word from M. de Chambrier. My reply to M. de Puiſieux was that I eſteemed myſelf ſo happy, in executing the commands of your majeſty, that I did not trouble myſelf concerning the preſent in queſtion; but that, as your majeſty might imagine my not having received the preſent was becauſe I had not been agreeable to the king, or had been guilty of ſome fault, I deſired his permiſſion for me ſimply to ſtate to you what had paſſed between us. To this he replied I ſhould give him pleaſure, and relieve him from his perplexity, by ſo doing. Such is the ſtate of the queſtion, and the affair will be decided by the anſwer of M. de Chambrier. Let me entreat your majeſty never to diſpute with Valory on literary ſubjects, for I imagine he hates me becauſe I have not been of his opinion.

I have ſeen the duc de Richelieu here, who told me he had been informed by miniſters * that your majeſty had been diſſatisfied with him, when he was at Dreſden; and added that he wrote a letter on this ſubject to the count von Rottemburg, charging the count to juſtify him to your majeſty. I replied

* *Par la voie des miniſtres.* Ambaſſadors I imagine are meant. T.

I was

I was abſolutely ignorant of the affair, and that your majeſty had never mentioned it to me.

The loſs of the French, in the laſt battle, is more conſiderable than that of the allies; they have been victorious, but victory has coſt them two thouſand more men than defeat has coſt their enemies.

Löwendal is laying ſiege to Bergen-op-Zoom; three-fourths of the officers in the army ſay he will not ſucceed; and perhaps ſuch is their wiſh, for they ſeldom have any affection for each other.

I hope your majeſty will pleaſe to inform me, ſhould there have been any thing in my conduct which may have given you offence. I take the liberty to ſend this letter by favour of your reſident at Aix la Chapelle, from the fear that the one which I ſend in the common mode ſhould be loſt. The poſt-offices here are often confuſed, and ill regulated.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER II.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 15, 1747.

I ARRIVED at Paris three days ago, where I found a letter from M. d'Arget, in which he informed me that your majeſty had done me the honour to write to me from Stettin. This letter I have been unfortunate enough not to receive; it apparently arrived at Weſel after my departure.

Leaving Liege, I a ſecond time paſſed the French army; from thence I went to Bruſſels, where I found M. de Chambrier about to quit the place. He can inform your majeſty of my conduct, and of thoſe marks of friendſhip with which I have been received.

I went to ſee a play at the army, and nothing can be more pitiable than the actors, who cannot play tragedy, and mutilate comedy. Drouillon, the perſon of whom your majeſty has heard, is a vile comedian; his wife, who plays love parts, is much better than himſelf; yet ſhe is bad, and ſo is ſuppoſed to be, in this wretched company; for the good actors have remained in the principal cities of the kingdom, being unwilling to travel the country.

There are here, at Paris, ſome provincial actreſſes,

treſſes, who, being unable to procure engagements, are in want of ſuch; but they are little better than thoſe I ſaw at the army. One came to me this morning whoſe name is Barnaud, offering to play the principal fine ladies. She is forty years of age, has loſt five or ſix teeth, and is as lovely in appearance as madame de Hauteville. I did not fail to promiſe her I would inform your majeſty of the great deſire ſhe has to go to Berlin, and I have acquitted myſelf of my promiſe.

I make this report to your majeſty that you may feel the neceſſity there is of waiting ſome time longer. I ſhall meet with ſome good performer either at Rouen, Lyons, Marſeilles, or Straſburg; theſe are the places at which to make inquiries, for elſewhere no good actors are to be found: none but the outcaſts of the companies of theſe cities. With reſpect to the theatre at Paris it is impoſſible to induce actors to leave it, without very conſiderable offers; and equally good performers may be found in the country. But I wait your majeſty's anſwer. The dancing muſe arrived in very good health at Paris, and I delivered her to her couſin La Salé. I am exceedingly well ſatisfied with her conduct. She refuſed to dance at the army, notwithſtanding ſhe was ſolicited by ſeveral of the nobility,

who ſaw her at Liege and knew her again. She muſt continue to act in the ſame manner at Paris. Laurette is not here, nor here has been; and I may add that the opera is totally deficient in performers; and that, except La Camargo, whoſe age is forty-three, there are no female dancers but of the third rank, very inferior to the little Lani. I entreat your majeſty to remain perſuaded that I ſhall do every thing which is neceſſary to be done.

I believe I ſhall ſee Vanloo and his wife tomorrow. I wiſh to ſtrike the poniard into their boſom, and make them ſenſible of their loſs. They are ſilly people, who have ſuffered themſelves to be deceived by the diſcourſe of various perſons that are unacquainted both with Berlin and with your majeſty. Should it ſtill be your intention to poſſeſs a great painter, I can procure you one much cheaper than Vanloo, who is as famous and as good an artiſt. Your majeſty may chooſe between Natoire, who is at preſent the firſt painter in Paris, and Pierre; the latter is the pupil of Le Moine, and perfectly poſſeſſes the taſte, in drawing, and the colouring of his maſter. His pictures are highly eſteemed, and his age is only thirty-five. Your majeſty may gain information of his merit from Schmidt. Theſe two painters and Vanloo form the firſt

claſs;

claſs; the beſt in Paris, theſe excepted, are but of the ſecond.

I yeſterday ſaw Voltaire, and he appeared to be delighted to meet his friend Iſaac. He would have taken me to viſit madame de Pompadour, who is at a country-houſe near Paris; but, my affairs detaining me in the city, I deſired him to defer the viſit for ſome days. Two days ago his law-ſuit with Thévenot, one of the opera band, was determined; each was to pay his own coſts of ſuit, and the memorials of Thévenot were condemned and ſuppreſſed as ſcandalous. Voltaire, with good reaſon, is diſſatisfied with the ſentence.

I ſupped with M. de Mairan in one of the firſt houſes of Paris. He is a little man whoſe manners are very mild and polite, who ſpeaks with much facility, who makes excellent remarks, and who has nothing of the pedantry of the mathematician. There is as much difference, between the converſation of him and that of M. Euler, as there is between the writings of Horace and thoſe of the moſt learned and pedantic Wolfius. I formed an acquaintance with the abbé Bernis, at the houſe of madame d'Argental, who is the niece of the cardinal de Tencin. He is an amiable man, and is to give me two charming

little

little pieces, which I ſhall ſend your majeſty by the firſt courier.

Paris is in high ſplendour, and ſeems wholly inſenſible of the war. Recruits are raiſed there with tolerable eaſe, and fifty battalions have been levied in the kingdom, the men of which will be clothed and armed by the month of March. I am active in my own affairs; and, thanks to the protection of your majeſty, I hope they will be ſoon and happily ended. I have already entered into ſome meaſures with my brother, who is penetrated by the obligations he has to your majeſty. The king has lately granted him the office of *Préſident à Mortier*, and has ordered the letters patent to be made out gratis, which is a very conſiderable recompenſe. I begin to be well perſuaded he muſt have been in ſome danger of being hanged, and that the jokes of laſt winter were not without foundation. He notwithſtanding affirms he never was in any fear of inſult, and continues to praiſe the Engliſh highly. I believe he will ſoon be employed at ſome court, which is an additional reaſon to preſs the concluſion of my buſineſs, the moment of ending which I ſhall think a very happy one, ſince it will be that at which I ſhall depart to pay my court to your majeſty, and again meet the beſt maſter on earth.

M. d'Arget

M. d'Arget informs me your majeſty has done me the honour to write to me twice, but I have not been fortunate enough to receive either of your letters. I entreat your majeſty to inform me to what place they have been directed, that I may ſend for them, and that you would be pleaſed to addreſs thoſe with which you ſhall honour me "*A mon Chambellan le Marquis d'Argens,* "*à l'hotel de Straſburg, rue du Sépulcre, faubourg* "*Saint Germain, à Paris.*"

I have not yet been either at the French or Italian theatre, but have ſeen the opera twice, having the key of the box of the duc de Duras, formerly the duc Durfort, by which I avoid a conſiderable expence. Your majeſty perceives that former friends are always ſerviceable, and that the court which I paid to the duc de Richelieu, at Philipſburg, is of uſe to me at preſent. I find the opera performers very indifferent, compared to thoſe I have ſeen. The women ſingers are by no means of the firſt claſs. Le Mauve and La Peliſſier * are no longer there. The men dancers are bad, Duprès excepted, who however is growing old. I have already ſpoken to your majeſty of the women dancers.

There is a counter-tenor ſinger, or what the Italians call a contr'alto, who has the fineſt voice

* Both females. T.

I ever

I ever heard in my life; his name is Gelio. One of the operas of Rameau is at preſent acting, which appears to me below mediocrity, and the muſic of which is neither French nor Italian.

There are no new publications here, except ſome wretched political pamphlets, which are not common ſenſe. Voltaire has written an epiſtle on the battle lately fought, near Maſtricht, which is printed but diſavowed by him: he pretends that he did not write it in the manner it now appears. I do not ſend it your majeſty, becauſe I have no doubt it has already been ſent by Thiriot.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER III.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 26, 1747.

I HAVE, by favour of a banker, received one of the two letters which your majeſty did me the honour to write. Permit me to ſay you wrongfully ſuſpect me of indolence. During the month that I have been at Paris, I have entirely finiſhed my buſineſs; my relations have taken

taken every thing into conſideration, and nothing further is neceſſary, except ſtipulations to be mutually agreed on, ſo as to prevent ſimilar inconveniences in future. They offer to cede, by public contract, the ſum that I demand; which ſum is to afford me an annuity. This affair is of ſo much importance to me that, though there are three hundred leagues to travel, going and coming, between Provence and Paris, I ſhall take poſt for Aix, at the end of this month, and ſhall be here again toward the end of September. On the firſt of October I ſhall depart, ſhall travel poſt, and on the 15th ſhall be at Berlin. Thus mademoiſelle Cochois will be there more than ſix weeks before the opening of the opera-houſe.

Laurette does not come here, ſhe is engaged to go to London. Some engines have been put in motion to induce La Cochois to engage at the opera, but they have been ineffectual. She has even refuſed to dance; I have beſide publicly declared ſhe was engaged. In fine, I will be reſponſible to your majeſty on that affair.

Three days ſince the duc de Richelieu arrived at Paris; he is going to Genoa, and I ſhould have accompanied him into Provence, but that he means to ſtay a fortnight at Paris, before

which time I ſhall be at Aix. I therefore cannot go with him.

A few days ſince I dined at Paſſy, with madame de Tencin, the ſiſter of the cardinal, whoſe houſe is the rendezvous of the old wits. She is very polite, and is poſſeſſed of underſtanding. She put a queſtion to me which I will hereafter repeat to your majeſty.

I often ſup with the abbé de Bernis, in one of the beſt houſes of Paris. He there read two poetical pieces the other day, copies of which I requeſted, to ſend them to your majeſty, and one of which I think you will find much ſuperior to the other. The perſon of the abbé is very agreeable and his manners exceedingly mild.

I have twice ſeen the young Pretender, and have even once dined in his company. This prince is well made, has an air of modeſty, ſpeaks little, and appears to have much judgment. He told me he had heard, with infinite ſatisfaction, that, while he was in Scotland, your majeſty ſpoke of him with great kindneſs. He is very ill at his eaſe here, and appears to ſupport his ſituation with much fortitude. I have many things to ſay to your majeſty, on the ſubject.

I have not yet ſpoken of the French or Italian theatre, in my letters. The latter is in general well ſupported. Sylvia ſtill continues the beſt

actreſs

actreſs in the kingdom. Harlequin is a great performer. Caroline plays with more vivacity than genius, but ſhe is handſome. De Haye acts the valet excellently, and Lelio is well adapted to the fop, and certain characteriſtic parts.

With reſpect to the French theatre, I find it dreadfully on the decline. The actreſs Dumenil, ſo much vaunted of by M. de Voltaire, has a ſepulchral voice, and is frequently extravagant. Gauſſin is handſome, but ſhe can only play certain tender parts; in others ſhe is below mediocrity. Carville has feeling, but ſhe does not ſufficiently ſtudy her characters. Theſe actreſſes are all as far behind Le Couvreur, and De Seine, as the hyſſop is inferior to the cedar. With reſpect to the men, Grandval plays tragedy tolerably well, and petits-maîtres in love divinely. Lanoue would be a great comedian, were not all his talents ſpoiled by his hideous figure. The other comedians are either bad or do not ſurpaſs mediocrity.

I have informed your majeſty of what I think of the opera in my other letters.

I have ſeen M. de Maurepas, who behaved with great politeneſs to me, and even made me ſome offers of ſervice.

The king is expected here about the tenth or

the twelfth of the next month, for which reaſon I ſhall not go to Verſailles till I return from Provence; for any viſit which I might pay there at preſent appears to me to be of very little utility. To-morrow I am to dine at the houſe of the duc d'Elbeuf, a prince of the family of Lorraine, with the elder Crébillon. In my firſt letter I ſhall write to your majeſty concerning this author, and his tragedy of Catiline, which he is to read to the company.

I am with profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER IV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Paris, September 5, 1747.

I RECEIVED the duplicate of the letter your majeſty wrote, at the very moment I was about to depart for Provence. I have not yet been fortunate enough to obtain the original, but I went to the poſt-office, where I made a terrible uproar; they promiſed they would ſeek for it, and make all poſſible inquiries.

I will execute your majeſty's commiſſions to the beſt of my power. That of the man of letters who muſt be no pedant, but of an amiable character,

character, appears to me the moſt difficult. All perſons, in this country, who are poſſeſſed of certain abilities, are ſcarcely poſſible to obtain. Thus Greſſet, for example, of whom your majeſty ſpeaks, has two places, the ſalaries of which amount to two thouſand crowns; to this muſt be added he has a miſtreſs, who is one of the prettieſt women in Paris. A man prejudiced in favour of his country will never quit it, when he is detained both by intereſt and affection. The inclination which Frenchmen of literature have for Paris is ſo great, and they are ſo well ſatisfied with the pleaſures which they imagine they find there, that it is even difficult to induce men of mediocrity to quit this city. The abbé le Blanc, whom your majeſty wiſhed to have, and whom you are very fortunate not to have obtained, is a man very little reſpected; one of the ſubaltern, nay the very ſubaltern wits; yet that man finds reſources and pleaſures, at Paris, in numerous families, becauſe it is at preſent the mania, in France, to be intimate with men of wit; and financiers as well as dukes wiſh to have it ſaid that the learned are admitted to their houſes. There are young people who have gained knowledge; but ſome of them are totally deficient in the manners of perſons of faſhion, and are preciſely nothing more than au-

thors. There are others who, having nothing but wit, are of deſpicable characters; and, like the abbé Fréron, have viſited the Bicêtre, or the priſons of Vincennes, for their unworthy conduct. Notwithſtanding theſe difficulties, your majeſty may be aſſured that, on my return from Provence, where I ſhall not remain more than three weeks, it ſhall be my endeavour to give you ſatisfaction.

With reſpect to the painter, that is an article of leſs difficulty: but I muſt act with cunning, otherwiſe our preſent man will demand the ſame ſum your majeſty was willing to have given Vanloo; and I wiſh to obtain him at a cheaper rate.

I now come to the actreſſes. The two girls mentioned by Petit ſing at the concert of Rouen, and have never acted in comedy. They are ſaid to be tolerably handſome, but I think we ſhould not have recourſe to them, unleſs no good performers can be found at Lyons, where I ſhall be in four days; or on my return, at Straſburg. Good actreſſes are very ſcarce, even at Paris; and I can aſſure your majeſty that, mademoiſelle Babet having gained ſome reputation, and paſſing here for a girl of good underſtanding, propoſals have been made to me concerning her, for the French theatre. Your majeſty could not but

but have laughed, had you ſeen the grimace with which I anſwered. I ſatisfied myſelf however with replying that people of merit and genius never quitted the ſervice of your majeſty. Your theatre has ſuffered a conſiderable loſs in the younger Cochois, who it is true was an inſolent lunatic, but an excellent comedian, and as much ſuperior to the comic actors of the French theatre, at Paris, as Hauteville was ſuperior to all competitors in folly. I ſhall immediately do myſelf the honour to inform your majeſty of what I ſhall meet with at Lyons.

I am, with profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER V.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Marſeilles, September 27, 1747.

FROM the diligence I uſe, your majeſty will no longer accuſe me of indolence. I have been a week in Provence, where I have ended all my affairs to my ſatisfaction. I ſhall depart for Paris in ſix days, whither I ſhall return for the actreſs Cochois, and your majeſty may be aſſured we ſhall be at Berlin, according to our orders, by the end of the month of October.

tober, I ſhall then have travelled near ſix hundred leagues in two months, conſequently your majeſty will ſcarcely ſay that I travel ſlowly. On my arrival at Paris, I ſhall conclude my engagement with the painter, whom your majeſty wiſhes to have; and you may be aſſured I will ſend you an excellent one.

On my road into Provence, I ſaw almoſt all the companies of comedians in the kingdom. The actors of the Dijon company are all below mediocrity; in that of Lyons there is a good comic actor, but he demands an extraordinary ſalary; there is alſo an indifferent fine lady, who is kept by a paramour, therefore not eaſy to obtain, and who is not worth the fourth of the ſalary ſhe aſks. The company at Aix, my dear native place, is execrable; there is not one performer capable of playing ſecond parts, in a good comedy. In fine, the vexation of finding no one who could ſuit your majeſty obliged me to go to Marſeilles, where I met with three of the moſt excellent performers in the kingdom. I do not except even thoſe of Paris, to whom I think them ſuperior, if we exclude Dumenil. Two of the three are the ſieur Rouſſelois and his wife, who had formerly been engaged for the ſervice of your majeſty, and who were not fortunate enough to go to Berlin.

Berlin. The huſband acts tragic parts in a ſuperior ſtyle, as well as comic. He has the dignity and good ſenſe of Baron, the fire of Dufrene, and the voice of the elder Quinault. He would long ſince have been at Paris, where he made his appearance with extraordinary ſucceſs, had not a gentleman of the chamber, who imagined he had ſome reaſon of perſonal complaint againſt him, openly declared himſelf his enemy*! In fine, ſire, I never have met with any man ſo perfect as this performer, who is as much ſuperior to all the actors we have at Berlin as Cochois is to Auguſta and Artus.

His wife is a young beauty of twenty, with an oval countenance, piercing and tender eyes, her noſe thin, and her mouth ſmall and gracefully intelligent. She is rather taller than Marian; her waiſt is ſlender and charming, and ſhe acts with great delicacy and underſtanding. In tragedy ſhe has the affecting voice of De Seine, and in deep love the dignity of Le Couvreur. Her lungs are rather feeble; but as ſhe acts here ſix times a week, ſhe will not be ſen-

* The chief gentlemen of the king's chamber are, in France, at leaſt have hitherto been, the legiſlators of the theatres; and have at the ſame time the executive power of the laws they themſelves have made. An arrêt was iſſued to this purpoſe in 1757 by Louis *the well-beloved*. T.

ſible of that inconvenience at Berlin, where ſhe may have three or four days reſt in that time.

The third is a tall girl of ſeventeen, whoſe name is Drouin, the ſiſter of a comedian, who acts the principal parts at Paris. Her figure is beautiful, her eyes full of ardour, her mouth pleaſing, and her countenance good. She has much intelligence, as an actreſs, performs the fine lady with good ſenſe, and the chamber maid in caſe of need. She alſo delivers tragedy exceedingly well.

All the three are ready to engage in the ſervice of your majeſty. I at firſt met with ſome difficulty, with the ſieur Rouſſelois and his wife, becauſe he complained that he had before been induced to give up a very conſiderable engagement, which he had at Bordeaux; but I made him ſo ſenſible of the advantages attending being in the ſervice of your majeſty that he is, at preſent, delighted to enter that ſervice.

I have made no agreement yet with theſe performers, nor ſhall, till I have firſt the honour to learn what are your majeſty's intentions; becauſe I cannot ſay whether the conditions, which they propoſe, will be agreeable to you. I ſaw the written articles of the ſieur Rouſſelois and his wife, at this place, and they have each of them a thouſand French crowns, and demand each a thouſand German crowns. Eight hundred

dred I offered, and harangued, with all my rhetoric, a whole hour to no effect.

With reſpect to the little Drouin, I call her little becauſe ſhe is exceedingly graceful, and ſtill has thoſe childiſh manners which ſo well become youth, ſhe conſents to engage for ſix hundred crowns. There is another circumſtance of which I muſt not neglect to inform your majeſty, which is that they cannot come before Eaſter, becauſe their engagements do not end till that time. And it is here neceſſary I ſhould offer a reflection to your majeſty; you will not at preſent, ſire, meet with any, except very bad performers, who are not under engagements till the ſame period. I ſhall further obſerve to your majeſty that I ſhould adviſe you not again to receive thoſe who have deſerted; becauſe, having been guilty of one bad action, they are capable of committing a ſecond, and thus of quitting your majeſty's ſervice. I imagine therefore it is neceſſary you ſhould have patience till Eaſter. The company muſt paſs through the winter as well as it can; and I undertake, with the preſent actors, to repreſent one good comedy per week, till that time.

Permit me to make one remark to your majeſty. We are continually recruiting largely but ſeldom to any good purpoſe. Since I have

ſeen

ſeen the comedians of Paris and thoſe of Marſeilles, I can truly aſſure your majeſty I am more than ever convinced you have but two comedians who deſerve the name of actor or actreſs, and thoſe are Favier and La Cochois. How bad will all the reſt appear compared to the performers I at preſent propoſe! And as to the girls, mentioned by Petit, they will be ſuch indifferent actreſſes that they have been refuſed engagements even in inferior companies. They ſing in chorus, in the concert at Rouen. I likewiſe think that we are in want of ready formed players, and not of ſuch as are yet to form, and who perhaps never would be formed.

I am, with profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER VI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Paris, November 3, 1747.

I HAVE been two days at Paris, which place I ſhould have immediately left, had not Mademoiſelle Cochois requeſted four or five days, to diſpatch ſome buſineſs. I agreed, without difficulty, becauſe I comprehended that, conſidering the deſertion of Lani and the other wretches,

wretches, ſhe will arrive ſoon enough for the opera rehearſals; ſince Sodi, and the other performers that are engaged, cannot depart before the 10th or 12th of this month, by which time ſhe will be on the road.

Nothing can be more ſhocking than the behaviour of Lani; he deſerves to feel the whole weight of your majeſty's indignation. I have ſpoken to every perſon in Paris as I ought to ſpeak, reſpecting this fellow, and his companions in deſertion and knavery; and I ſhall continue to make their character ſo well known, before I leave the city, that they will repent of their folly. Lani has procured an engagement for his ſiſter at the French theatre, where ſhe has already danced and played two parts; but one of the opera directors, with whom I am acquainted, has promiſed me that he will oblige her to quit the company; becauſe, having formerly belonged to the opera, ſhe cannot be engaged at the playhouſe.

As I know of no better way of paying my court, to your majeſty, than by always ſpeaking the truth, I am perſuaded I ſhall not diſpleaſe you, when I aſſure you thoſe who have ſaid that Teiſſier had held diſcourſe by which he merited diſgrace have miſinformed you. Your majeſty knows I would rather die than impoſe upon you

you in the moſt trifling affair; and I can proteſt that, while I rémained at Paris, though he was preſſed by the directors of the opera to engage with them, he continually ſpoke with the moſt profound reſpect, on every ſubject that had any relation to your majeſty. I was deſirous to know whether, during my abſence, he had committed any fault; I therefore yeſterday ſpoke to M. de Chambrier, and the following are the very words of your majeſty's miniſter.—"I muſt "do juſtice to Teiſſier, he is very different from "the others, and has on every occaſion ſpoken "with all poſſible zeal, in favour of Berlin and "of the king. This is a teſtimony which I owe "to truth, and which I ſhall be happy to pay, "ſhould I ever be queſtioned by his majeſty."

The anſwer of M. de Chambrier determined me to write on the ſubject; eſpecially as I muſt not conceal from your majeſty that we are in great want of Teiſſier. All the men whom we have engaged here are bad performers, except Sodi. The reſt are by no means equal to Giraud, of which you yourſelf will ſoon be convinced. Your majeſty perhaps will aſk why I ſuffered Petit to engage ſuch indifferent performers. To this I anſwer I was not at Paris, when they were engaged; and that, even if I had been there, I muſt have acted as he has done,

ſince

ſince the ſhortneſs of the time and the neceſſity of having a ballet for the opera, this winter, did not leave any freedom of choice. Thus we were obliged to be ſatisfied with performers who, at another time, would not have been engaged. Had I dared to take any thing upon myſelf, I would have limited the engagements of theſe people to a ſhorter period; though, to ſpeak freely, I believe moſt of them will take leave in leſs than two years without a diſmiſſion. Did I know another ſerious dancer any way equal to Teiſſier I ſhould dwell leſs on his recal; but I am vexed that we ſhould leave the Pariſians a performer for whom it will be ſo difficult to find a ſubſtitute, and whom they in ſome ſhort time intend as the ſucceſſor of Duprès; for he has certainly given great pleaſure.

Caroline would not accept of eight thouſand livres, her demand is ten. I muſt likewiſe inform your majeſty that you have no doubt been deceived by the name of Caroline. You have ſuppoſed it was the elder ſiſter, the actreſs who pleaſes infinitely at Paris; but it is the younger ſiſter, who is yet only a child. She is no higher than little Lani was, when ſhe firſt came to Berlin, than whom ſhe has leſs merit, and dances much leſs ſcientifically. True it is ſhe has more feeling, and is handſomer; but to

give

give a ſalary of eight thouſand livres to a child, who has only a quarter ſhare * at the Italian theatre, for ſhe has only eighteen hundred livres, is ſurely to pay well. Permit me to obſerve to your majeſty that granting too large ſalaries, to performers who are not very excellent, is the reaſon that thoſe who are, at length, require an increaſe of ſalary; and, though they ſhould be well paid, they perſuade themſelves they are not ſo.

A lady of the name of madame Ribou came to viſit me this morning, and I thought ſhe would not have been ſatisfied with any thing leſs than both my eyes. She accuſed me of being the cauſe that ſhe has not been engaged, I having ſo precipitately engaged performers at Marſeilles. I anſwered, till the very moment in which I had the honour to ſpeak to her, I was ignorant that there was ſuch a perſon on earth. To this ſhe replied ſo much the worſe for me: I ſaid nothing more, for I feared a beating; but, in order to rid myſelf of her, I promiſed to

* The performers both of the French and Italian theatres manage their own affairs, conſequently are not in the pay of a proprietor or proprietors; and, as the property is their own, they ſhare their profits, ſtipulating with any new performer whom they receive to grant ſuch portion of a whole ſhare as the abilities of the candidate may demand. T.

write

write concerning her to your majeſty. I have been told that you intended to have granted her a ſalary of a thouſand crowns; but your majeſty would have been rather ſurpriſed, the firſt you ſhould have met a woman forty years of age, and tolerably ugly. As an actreſs, I know not whether ſhe be good or bad; but I have conceived an indifferent opinion of her talents, becauſe ſhe has more than eight months been left to trapes the ſtreets of Paris without meeting any engagement. It appears to me that performers for your majeſty's ſervice are engaged without ſufficient examination; and particularly that very free uſe is made of your purſe.

An actor, named Loinville, has been to me, and informed me that he had been written to, and that he required a ſalary of eight thouſand livres. I ſhrugged my ſhoulders and turned away. I knew this Loinville, whom I have ſeen in Provence, almoſt thirty years ago. He is a good country comedian, but nothing more; inferior to Favier, but ſuperior to the others whom we have.

M. Petit brought me a woman whom he intended to engage, to play queens and heroines. She is neither handſome nor even pretty, but ſhe is not very ugly. I heard her repeat ſome lines

lines with good ſenſe, and ſhe rehearſed a comic ſcene with great vivacity. She aſked a thouſand crowns, I offered ſix hundred, and ſignified to M. Petit that I ſhould ſign her engagement on no other terms. I conclude her to be engaged, and that ſhe will be in your majeſty's ſervice.

Petit introduced to me two young people, to play the inferior tragic parts, and the ſecond-lovers, with whom I was exceedingly well ſatisfied. They are youthful, pleaſing in figure, have good voices, and are intelligent. I heard them rehearſe two or three ſcenes, and, though they only pretend to the parts I have mentioned, I think them as good, and perhaps better, than Desforges and Remuſberg; at leaſt they act with more intelligence and nature. I offered them four hundred crowns, and declared I would take no part in their engagement on any other terms.

In the courſe of the week we ſhall find the two confidents, of whom we ſtill are in want, to render the Berlin company the moſt complete and the beſt in Europe. M. Darget wrote to inform me of your majeſty's intentions, on that ſubject; and I wiſh to engage, at the price I offered the two young men, two pretty girls of character and talents; for, ſhould I accept thoſe whoſe manners are looſe, they would deſert, and the company would again be in diſorder.

I ſent the engagement concluded to Rouſſelois and his wife; and I repeat, what I before ſaid to your majeſty, that, Dumenil and Lanoue excepted, you have in theſe two performers obtained the beſt France affords. They will depart at the beginning of Lent, with little Drouin, who is as pretty as Barbarini, is better made, and who will in leſs than a year be the moſt lovely actreſs in Europe. M. Lenfant, navy commiſſioner in Provence, will ſend their articles to Berlin, to my addreſs, which they will give him when he ſhall deliver mine; therefore their articles will be at Berlin before me.

In leſs than three days I ſhall have engaged one of the greateſt painters in Paris. I am in treaty with two, and ſhall cloſe with the moſt reaſonable; for, whenever men of abilities, whom your majeſty wiſhes to poſſeſs, offer me propoſals which I think in the leaſt unreaſonable, I laugh in their face and ſeek for others.

I ſend no news concerning the army to your majeſty, becauſe you will hear this as ſoon as I can. While I was in Provence, I obtained memorials of the two laſt campaigns in Italy, which may amuſe your majeſty.

I forgot to inform your majeſty that, not having received your orders to engage the figurante, of whom I ſpoke, till I arrived at Paris,

don Philip, who had before ſeen her at Marſeilles, and who like me thought her pretty, offered her an engagement, as a ſecond dancer, in a company which he intends to have this winter, in the city where he ſhall reſide, and ſent for her to Nice in the interim. The charming girl however had the fortitude to heſitate, between the prince and the chamberlain. She told me that, were I but certain ſhe ſhould be received, ſhe would depart for Berlin. No orders had reached me, I therefore feared leſt I ſhould injure the poor girl; and, not daring to take upon me to inſure her an engagement, ſhe departed for Nice. I am ſorry I was not fortunate enough to receive the letter, in which M. d'Arget deſired me to engage her, in Provence. I have loſt the conſolation of my old days.

Plus gente chérubine ne ſe vit onc;
Blancheur de lis, & croupe de chanoine.*

Should your majeſty however wiſh to ſee this miracle of our age caper at the Berlin theatre, ſhe has told me ſhe will come there, if you will engage her, at Eaſter; and that ſhe will accompany Rouſſelois and his wife.

I will do myſelf the honour to write to

* Angel more lovely was never ſeen; the complexion of the lily, and the hip of a nun.

your

your majeſty, by the firſt poſt, concerning the painter.

Voltaire is at Fontainebleau, from which he will return on Wedneſday, and I ſhall ſup with him at the houſe of madame du Chatelet. He perhaps may ſupply me with ſome literary intelligence, to ſend your majeſty.

I am, with profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER VII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

The petition of a poor ſick patient, to a great king in good health.

SIRE, Potſdam, March 28, 1750.

I HAVE two days flattered myſelf with the pleaſing hope that I ſhould be fortunate enough to pay my court to your majeſty; but, ever ſince yeſterday, I have loſt the uſe of half of my limbs. A vile ſcorbutic humour is every moment aſſuming a different form. M. Cothenius aſſures me that, by the aid of ten or twelve days, he will render me as athletic as a wreſtler at the Olympic games.

But I have another malady, of which your

majeſty alone can cure me; which malady is the fear of having diſpleaſed you; and all remedies for the body are impotent, while the mind is diſeaſed. After the example of the Meſſiah, your majeſty may afford me an inſtantaneous cure, by deſiring the holy abbé de Prades to aſſure me, on your part, that I may ſwallow in peace all the diabolic beverage which Cothenius ſhall preſcribe. Let not your majeſty imagine that the trade of miracle-monger does not become you; recollect it is a trade which has not been held in contempt by the greateſt princes. Veſpaſian, the ſucceſſor of ſo many wicked emperors, and who put an end to the ſufferings of the empire, condeſcended to cure a lame man, by treading on his leg, in Syria; and a blind man, in Judea, by rubbing his eyes with his ſaliva. Your majeſty will perform a miracle with leſs trouble; and you will allow that, however little may be my worth, I am at leaſt equal to an old blind Jew.

I therefore recommend myſelf to your bounty; and, extended on my couch between two old books, one Greek and the other Latin, have the honour to remain, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Paris, May 14, 1751.

I SHOULD have done myſelf the honour to have written to your majeſty, on my arrival at Paris, had I not feared to diſpleaſe. Suppoſing, as I did, you were diſſatisfied with my conduct, I apprehended you would condemn ſuch a liberty; nor can I expreſs the joy I felt, when M. de Chambrier informed me that your majeſty had the goodneſs to permit me to write to you; becauſe this gives me an opportunity again to aſſure your majeſty that I have been obliged, by an obſtinate and dangerous diſeaſe, not to pay that punctual obedience to your commands which I could have wiſhed.

It is now about ſeven months ſince I arrived at Paris, in a deplorable condition. M. de Chambrier muſt have certified to your majeſty that I do not impoſe, and that I never have impoſed upon you, on this ſubject. Agreeable to the preſcriptions of the moſt able phyſicians, I durſt not neglect going to paſs the winter in a country extremely warm. Had I not been ill, why ſhould I not have remained all winter at

Paris, inſtead of repairing to the foot of the mountains of Genoa? I have been returned about a month, in exceeding good health. I made it my firſt care, when I came to Paris, to viſit M. de Chambrier, that I might learn whether he had received any orders for me, and his anſwer was that he knew nothing preciſely on this buſineſs. I was therefore prevented from continuing my journey to Berlin, not knowing whether I had the misfortune to be in total diſgrace with your majeſty. Let me be permitted to requeſt, with the moſt reſpectful ardour, that you would be pleaſed to inform me what are your commands. I ſhould eſteem myſelf moſt happy, ſhould I have the good fortune to be continued in the ſervice of the beſt maſter the world affords. Never ſince I have been diſtant from your majeſty have I, for a moment, loſt ſight of the bounty with which you have honoured me, and which, let me live in what country on earth I may, will ever remain engraved on my heart.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER IX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, February 8, 1754.

TWO hours before break of day, the poſtillion, whom your majeſty did me the honour to ſend to me, came knocking at my door. All my ſervants were faſt aſleep; and, having myſelf been the firſt to hear him, I called, with might and main, that they ſhould let in Mr. Carita, my apothecary, who was bringing me the emulſion that I was to take that morning. A moment after my lacquey entered my chamber, followed by a man in boots, dreſſed in blue, and holding a packet in his hand. I rubbed my eyes, and opened them as wide as I could, unable to comprehend by what enchantment an apothecary had been ſuddenly metamorphoſed into a poſtillion, and a bottle of emulſion into a letter.

Somewhat come to myſelf, I heaved a half paralytic arm from under the bed-clothes, opened the letter, and, by the light of a candle, which my almoſt naked footman held, I read your majeſty's verſes; which, by way of paren-

theſis, had they been written even by a private perſon, would have immortaliſed me. They are worthy of Chaulieu.

Having finiſhed reading, I bolſtered myſelf up; and thus propped, like a ruinous building, I have now the honour to write theſe few lines to your majeſty, which have coſt me many an oh, and ah! For you know, ſire, I am very far from a ſtoic.

Your majeſty however does not do me juſtice, when you ſuppoſe me confined to my bed by indolence. Not but the ſuppoſition might have had ſome probability on its ſide, had I been required to go from Potſdam to Berlin; but for me to remain at Berlin, when I might be at Potſdam, it were neceſſary I ſhould be as much a paralytic as the man of the goſpel. I hope however I ſhall be cured, in three or four days; and Pharmacy aſſures me I have only to take ſome two dozen clyſters, ſwallow three preſcriptions, and uſe ſix bottles of emulſion, and that it will then ſay to me "Take up thy bed and walk—begone to "Potſdam."

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER X.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, November 7, 1754.

SINCE it has pleaſed your majeſty to add to the title of conqueror that of reconciler of prodigal ſons, and that you have undertaken to bring within the pale of the church a father of the eighteenth century, the abbé de Prades, I dare flatter myſelf you will procure Eſau's portion for me; and that, diſinherited as I am, like that ancient Jew, I ſhall ſtill have the honour to receive paternal benediction. This ſervice your majeſty may render me, which will make me proſperous in the life preſent, and the life to come.

My father, and all my relations, have written the moſt preſſing letters to me, to requeſt your majeſty would be pleaſed to order your ambaſſador, at Paris, to recommend to M. de Sechel* a perſon named M. Pſeautier, a director of the poſt-office in Provence, when any opportunity ſhall offer for M. de Sechel to render him ſer-

* I imagine this muſt be the M. Sechelles mentioned by the king, with ſo much reſpect, in the Hiſtory of my own Times; and by M. d'Arget, in his Letters: if ſo, the name here is erroneouſly ſpelled. T.

vice,

vice. The man aſks only a vague letter of recommendation, the effects of which perhaps will never take place; not but it may ſome day procure him a more lucrative poſt.

My father, who for twenty years paſt has never written to me but with great coldneſs, ſpeaks in the moſt affectionate manner, in his letter, and tells me, ſhould I oblige him on this occaſion, he will one day repair a part of the ill he has done me. I own to your majeſty that, ſhould he bequeath me four or five thouſand crowns, at his death, more than would otherwiſe revert to me, I ſhould not be vexed. I know that, while attached to your majeſty, I never ſhall be in want; but cannon balls have killed men; ay, even Turenne, Berwick, and Charles XII. If your majeſty will but enter into bond never more to command armies, I will moſt willingly renounce all legacies after the death of my father. I being ten years older than your majeſty, and having thirty fits of the colic and fifteen of the rheumatiſm per month, I muſt, by the indubitable calculation of the greateſt arithmeticians, ſtrike my mundane tent fifteen years before your majeſty.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, October 4, 1756

I KNOW not whether the letter which I have the honour to write to your majeſty will be delivered to you at Vienna; for in truth, according to the manner in which you manage matters, we ought to ſuppoſe that you will take a province once a fortnight. It is a month ſince you left Potſdam, and you are now maſter of Saxony; and, by the glorious victory which you have juſt gained over the Auſtrians, half of the kingdom of Bohemia is under your power. All Europe reſounds with your high deeds; and the public papers have already informed the world that your progreſs, and the conqueſts of your armies, are principally due to your own celerity, courage, and the extent of your genius.

There is one circumſtance however which afflicts me. We are told that your majeſty very cavalierly remained ſix-and-thirty hours without taking any food: and that, on the eve of the battle, you did not afford yourſelf leiſure to eat a ſingle mouthful. Let me entreat your majeſty to remember that excellent remark in your poem of the Palladium—

Palladium—"*Le pain fait le ſoldat**." This is a moſt important truth. Fame is the food of the ſoul, but the ſtomach requires ſomething more ſubſtantial; eſpecially when it is weak, and when the proſperity of a great ſtate depends on the ſtomach and the health of the body. Make the Saxons faſt as long as you pleaſe; you have my full conſent; but do not ſet them the pernicious example of learning to live without food.

A-propos of the Saxons, when I remember the manner in which you treat them, I am tempted to believe, that to the title of archbiſhop of Magdeburg, you intend to add that of grand penitentiary †; and that you think it neceſſary to oblige the king of Poland, and his ſoldiers, to faſt till the period of penance which you have impoſed upon them ſhall be accompliſhed. In the mean time, they will have no need of rhubarb, or digeſtive powders. Indigeſtion is a malady to which they will not be ſubject, and count Bruhl will leave the camp with a waiſt as ſlender as a girl of fifteen.

Before I conclude my letter, permit me to entreat your majeſty, in quality of biſhop, to grant abſolution to the abbé de Prades, ſhould he by chance have knocked ſome Auſtrian on the

* Bread makes the ſoldier.

† A dignity in catholic cathedrals. T.

head,

head, and have incurred the cenſure of holy mother church.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XII.

From the King.

Undated.

MY troops, my dear marquis, have performed wonders. For my own part, poor philoſopher as I am, I was but one man among twenty-five thouſand. You laugh at the hungry Saxons, but we muſt take theſe people by ſome means or other; and there is no better way to tame a Lucullus than that of obliging him to faſt. I received your firſt letter, but returned no anſwer, becauſe I was among hills and dales.

I have left the abbé in Saxony, not wiſhing he ſhould ſtain his hands with pure catholic blood.

The brain of the French is turned; nothing can be more indecent than what they ſay, concerning me. It might be affirmed that the ſalvation of France depends on the houſe of Auſtria. The tears of a dauphineſs have been more elo-

quent

quent than the manifeſto I have publiſhed againſt the Auſtrians, and Saxons. In fine, my dear marquis, I deplore the conſequences of that earthquake which has driven all the politicians of Europe mad, and I wiſh you tranquillity, health, and content.

Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, October 17, 1756.

ALBA then is incorporated with Rome! By your prudence, the enemies of the ſtate will become its citizens, and defenders! After actions ſo ſplendid, where is the man, however prejudiced, who will not be obliged to acknowledge the ſuperiority of your information? The French condemn you; thus did the Athenians declaim againſt Philip, when he became the arbitrator of Greece. You will be the arbitrator of Europe. It is but natural that the modern Athenians, who are as frivolous as were the ancient, ſhould

ſhould imitate their conduct. The injurious diſcourſe of the French will be the eulogium of your glory. I wiſh theſe lunatics, ſeduced by falſe hopes, may make bonfires whenever you ſhall happen to have a day's illneſs, and announce your death. Such indecent rejoicings form the fineſt anecdote in the hiſtory of William III.

I have carefully executed the commiſſion with which the count von Finckenſtein has charged me; but, as I do not underſtand the German, and he was obliged to employ the printer, who is under oath, and who prints all the manuſcripts of the palace, which are meant to be kept ſecret till their publication, I have been obliged to recur to M. de Francheville, for the correction of the preſs, who is likewiſe under oath, who does underſtand the German language, and who has corrected the edition of your majeſty's works. I have acted thus with the conſent and by the advice of the count von Finckenſtein.

With reſpect to your majeſty's letter, it is excellent, and written with all poſſible dignity. A ſingle word only has been altered. The count von Finckenſtein having informed me that the Swedes have eagerly demonſtrated much good will for a month paſt, and that he feared they

would be exceedingly offended, by the phraſe *cruel and ſanguinary ariſtocracy*, I have ſubſtituted *tumultuous ariſtocracy*. I hope your majeſty will not condemn this trifling alteration, in order to ſoften; ſince your miniſter appeared to me to be in real pain.

I and M. Féderſdorf have been in inconceivable grief, at receiving letters from Berlin in which it was affirmed you had been wounded, in an ambuſcade, and that you were certainly taken priſoner. The intelligence was related ſo circumſtantially that it threw us into deſpair. We immediately ſent to Berlin, to inquire at the fountain head; and, after having ſuffered ſeven hours, we learnt that all which our letters contained was one ſtring of falſehoods. Permit me to inform your majeſty of a bon mot of M. Mitchel, the Engliſh envoy, occaſioned by theſe fabricators of bad news.—"We find Jaco-"bites," ſaid he, "at Berlin; yet it is ſingular "that there is no pretender*."

I have the honour to be, &c.

* The ſuppoſed wit of this *bon mot* I imagine to be a pun, inſinuating that the king was not, like the hero of the Jacobites, a mere pretender. T.

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LETTER XIV.

From the King.

1757.

THIS year, my dear marquis, has been a dreadful one to me. I ſhall make every poſſible and every impoſſible attempt, to ſave the ſtate; but, the truth is, I have more need than ever of ſecondary cauſes to be ſucceſsful. The affair of the 5th of November was a very fortunate one. We have taken eight French generals, two hundred and ſixty officers, and more than ſix thouſand men priſoners. Our loſs is one colonel, two officers, and ſixty-ſeven ſoldiers, with two hundred and twenty-three wounded. This was more than I could have hoped. We muſt ſee what the future will produce.

I have been obliged to arreſt the abbé; he has acted the ſpy, of which I have many evident proofs. His proceedings are highly ungrateful, and infamous.

I have written a prodigious quantity of poetry. If I live, I will ſhew you my verſes, in winter quarters; if I fall, I have bequeathed them to you, and have ordered them to be delivered to you.

Our good people of Berlin have no reaſon at preſent to fear a viſit, either from Auſtrians or

Swedes; and, by gaining one battle, I have derived nothing but the advantage of being able ſafely to oppoſe other enemies. This ſeaſon of terror, and this dreadful war, will certainly form an epocha in hiſtory. Your Frenchmen have been guilty of cruelties worthy of pandours, and have acted like diſgraceful marauders. The bitterneſs which they teſtify toward me is really very ſhameful. Their proceedings only tend to make an irreconcileable enemy of one who has been ſixteen years their friend.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I imagine you are in bed; do not lie there and rot, but recollect you have promiſed to join me in winter quarters. You have ſtill time enough to take your reſt, for at preſent I know not where to appoint you a rendezvous. Mine is the deſtiny of Mithridates, except that I want two ſons and a Monimia.

Adieu, my amiable, indolent, marquis.

LETTER XV.

From the King.

Undated.

REMEMBER, my dear marquis, that man is rather a feeling than a rational animal. I have

I have read and re-read the third book of Lucretius, but found nothing there except the neceſſity of evil, and the inefficacy of all remedy. The only alleviation I can find, for my grief, is in the daily labour I am obliged to undergo, and that continual employment with which I am furniſhed, by the number of my foes. Had I been cut off, at Kolin, I ſhould now have been in a harbour where I ſhould no more be in dread of ſtorms. But I muſt continue to be toſſed on a tempeſtuous ocean, till ſome yard and a half of earth ſhall afford me that good which in this world I ſought in vain.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I wiſh you health, and every kind of happineſs, which I myſelf want.

LETTER XVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

SIRE, Berlin, April 29, 1758.

IN the letter which your majeſty did me the honour to write, I found new marks of your bounty. You reſemble the good genii of the ancients, who, whenever they appeared to thoſe

they protected, it was by heaping new favours upon them. When ſhall I be happy enough to thank you for all your bounties, at Sans-Souci? When ſhall I there ſee you enjoy that peace which your glorious labours ſhall have procured? You inform me you are preparing to give your enemies battle, which is as much as to ſay you are preparing to vanquiſh them. Yet am not I the leſs alarmed. I inceſſantly fear, as do all your faithful ſubjects, of whom you are the father, leſt ſome accident ſhould happen to you. The glory and the proſperity of the kingdom center in you alone.

I know not whether I can profit by the leave which your majeſty has deigned to grant me, becauſe of my ſtill great weakneſs. To aid me in undertaking a journey which is ſo neceſſary to me, your majeſty might render me an eſſential ſervice; if, to ſo many other favours, you ſhould be pleaſed to add one more; which muſt be the laſt, for to importune you further would be to abuſe your majeſty's kindneſs.

I have met at Berlin with a couſin german of mine, M. de Mons, a captain in the regiment of Piedmont, a young man of three-and-thirty, whoſe conduct at Berlin and at Magdeburg has merited the public eſteem, and the friendſhip of M. von Seidlitz, who can give your majeſty

majeſty his character. Should you be pleaſed to grant him permiſſion to go to Aix, on his parole, he will accompany me as far as Chambéri; after which I ſhall continue my route through Savoy for Nice; and he his through Dauphiné for Aix. It will be a circumſtance of great utility to me to have the company of a French officer as far as Swiſſerland, and eſpecially of a kinſman and a friend. I venture to add to theſe reaſons that all my relations, and eſpecially my mother, from whom I expect the greateſt part of what I am to inherit, will be infinitely obliged to me for this permiſſion.

Thus, if your majeſty will grant me this favour, after having loaded me with your benefits, you will procure me new wealth in my own country, and will bring thoſe diſputes to an eaſy concluſion into which I perhaps ſhall have to enter. Pardon me, ſire, for having written thus at length, at a time when you are occupied by the moſt ſerious affairs. But I know the exceſs of your goodneſs; nor can you imagine the kindneſs you will do me, ſhould you grant me the favour I take the liberty to requeſt.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XVII.

From the King.

Undated.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear marquis, without a date, ſo that I may ſuppoſe it came from the ruins of Carthage, or from Cochinchina. But what leads me to preſume that you are in Provence is that, ſince your departure, the newſpapers are all filled with accounts of a monſter, which is committing dreadful ravages in that province, and which can be only you: for, in quality of Pruſſian, you muſt paſs for a monſter in France, or at leaſt at Verſailles. And ſuppoſing even that were not ſo, the people perhaps have ſeen you wrapped up in your riding coat, with your hood over your head, and your handkerchief up to your noſe, forming a figure which I own is monſtrous enough, to people who never ſaw it before.

The gazettes ſay you devour women and children. Fie upon you! Where did you learn that villanous trade? I never knew you guilty of ſuch tricks. But our manners are changed by travelling. Should this be a falſe accuſation, ſtill

ſtill, from a Janſeniſt, as you were, you are turned Jeſuit, becauſe your brother of Eguilles is one, and he has given you I know not what ſarms to corrupt you. You, marquis, are the man deſcribed by the proverb: "Shew me your "companions and I will tell you your fortune." I know that you ſometimes act the ſick man; but that is only that you may haunt the woods, and be the bugbear of a whole country.

Not ſatisfied with exciting rumours in Provence, you wiſh to trouble the peace of Paris. But what would my brother the moſt Chriſtian king ſay, were he to hear that the monſter, my chamberlain, were come to devour the children of the park of Verſailles, the wood of Senar, and the foreſt of Fontainebleau. A ſquadron of dragoons has been ſent after you into Provence; the French guards will be at your heels in Paris; and in deſpite of your addreſs, which is ſaid to be great in leaping from branch to branch, a muſket ball may happen to catch you. Should you even reſtrain this voracity, and while you live at Paris be ſatisfied, like all honeſt people who inhabit this globe, with eating fiſh, cows, and calves, what a noiſe would the gazette writers make! Theſe gentlemen have affirmed that you are charged with commiſſions ſo ſecret that they are unknown even to me; and, hear-

ing you were at Paris, they would give their lies a colouring which ſhould make them credited by the public. The whole corps diplomatique would be in motion, knowing you were arrived; the ſpies would begin to trot about, and falſe rumours would take wing.

Such would be the fruits of your travels. And what good would you effect? You have an annuity on the hotel de ville, which is regularly paid you. Do you wiſh to ſpeak to your friends? That you may do, and ſtop at a village not far from the city, at which the people with whom you have buſineſs may give you the meeting. You will do well to retreat through Bruſſels for Weſel; but for the love of God eat up no children on your journey. Meat is cheap, and you may have it in every place; and ſhould your imagination be inflamed ſo much, by the heat of the ſun of Provence, as to cauſe you to act the monſter, let the phlegmatic ſun of Weſtphalia cool your head ſo far as to render you, on your return, the ſame man you were at your departure.

I expect you, marquis, in the month of September; and prodigious diligence you will then indeed have made; for, as far as I recollect, the three kings only travelled thirteen miles in fifteen days. In fine, you will act in this accord-

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ing to your uſual prudence; and I recommend you, and every thing that relates to you, to the holy keeping of the Eternal Father.

LETTER XVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Hamburg, February 22, 1759.

AFTER having rendered ten thouſand thanks to your majeſty, for the kindneſs you have had in permitting me to regain my health, and take time to recover from a fit of ſickneſs, a hundred times more dangerous, and more tedious, than that which I ſuffered at Breſlau, I venture to inform you that I am much more courageous than you ſuppoſe, and that I ſhall depart in five days for Berlin, almoſt deprived of the uſe of a leg. Should not herb baths and ſummer ſtrengthen my nerves, then muſt I be ſupported by a melancholy crutch for the remainder of my life. Had I been lamed in the ſervice of your majeſty, it would have been ſome conſolation; but to become helpleſs in a bed and an arm chair is exceedingly vexatious. One thing however comforts me, which is that you have,

for three years, been ſo accuſtomed to ſee the halt, the maimed, and the blind, men lamed in every poſſible mode, that you will not take it ill when I appear before you with the left haunch higher than the right, and one leg projecting at a right angle.

Would the other were the ſame, provided I might but once ſee you at Potſdam, in peaceful enjoyment of the immortal glory which you have acquired. I hope autumn will reſtore you to your people, happy, and in perfect health. You have gained new allies, who are going to make a powerful diverſion into Italy in your favour. Never could the king of Spain have died more ſeaſonably. One effort more, ſire, for this campaign, and the cauſe is won. Then may you ſay, with David, I have ſeen the nations ſhake, riſe againſt me, and form vain projects; they have been ſcattered as the wind ſcatters the clouds, and their hopes have been but as vain dreams*.

After ſpeaking of the Hebrew poet, I take the liberty to ſend your majeſty ſome verſes on cardinal Cotin, which are ſaid to be written by Fréron. Perhaps you have not yet ſeen them, and I imagine you will not think them bad.

I have the honour to be, &c.

* This is no faithful citation of any one paſſage in the Pſalms. T.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 26, 1759.

I RECEIVED the letter your majeſty did me the favour to write at the moment I was leaving Hamburg, and I waited till I came to Berlin to have the honour of anſwering you; for, till my arrival there, I had never for a moment been certain, becauſe of the weak ſtate I am in, when I ſhould be fortunate enough to ſee it again. At length, after the labour of fourteen days, I have moſt glorioufly completed a journey of thirty miles.

My health notwithſtanding is better; and would your majeſty but permit me to make a campaign of ſix weeks, or two months continuance, I hope to be able, during the months of July and Auguſt, to attend you as far as Vienna. This would be no expence either to me or to your majeſty. I have been obliged to purchaſe horſes; for, be it peace or be it war, one of my legs will not bear me an hour together; I therefore keep a coach.

Notwithſtanding what your majeſty ſays, of the ſuperiority of numbers of the enemy, I remain convinced that you will finally oblige them

to

to agree to a glorious peace. The finances of France are in the moſt pitiable ſtate; ſhe has no longer any credit in foreign countries, and her trade is entirely ruined. The Engliſh manage in a manner which may beſt reduce her to accept ſuch conditions as ſhall be offered. Should they make themſelves maſters of Quebec, they will, if they pleaſe, oblige the French to go to war with the queen of Hungary. Their laſt conqueſt, the taking of Guadeloupe, has completely thrown all the merchants in the kingdom in a conſternation. In fine, there are, literally, neither money, ſhips, nor trade, in France; therefore how can the ſubſidies hereafter be paid? Let but one effort be made, this ſummer, and peace cannot but be concluded in autumn. I have, within this month, converſed with ſeveral of the greateſt merchants of Hamburg; and, among others, with two who, within a fortnight, had been in France; the one at Marſeilles, the other at Bordeaux. The firſt aſſured me that, inſtead of four hundred and ſixty merchant ſhips, which were ſent every year from Marſeilles into the Levant, ſeventeen only had left that port, for the laſt two years; all the others having been taken, burnt, or ſunken. The merchant from Bordeaux informed me that, within theſe eleven months, three ſhips only had left that port for the American iſlands

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and the north; inſtead of between five and ſix hundred, which annually uſed to depart for different latitudes. In fine, ſire, it is a certain fact that, for eighteen months paſt, the French have not received a pound of ſugar from their plantations. The Danes take up the ſugar from the refining houſes of Hamburg, carry it for ſale to France, and return back with the French money. Never was France ſo low in the ſtate of her finances, not even during the greateſt misfortunes of Louis XIV.

To this add the diſcontent of the nation is general; the people call for peace; a kind of phrenzy has ſeized on their council of ſtate; the miniſters hate each other, and labour for mutual deſtruction; changes in adminiſtration are almoſt daily. Remember theſe things, and your majeſty will perceive that France muſt ſeriouſly think of peace.

Beſide, if ſhe be exhauſted, who can pay ſubſidies to the Barbarians and Tartars? Who ſhall bribe the Swedes? Who ſhall maintain that multitude of collegiate ſcum which is called the army of the empire?

The Auſtrians I allow are brave fellows, and enemies that ought not to be deſpiſed; but you have beaten them ſo often that you will beat them again, whenever you pleaſe to employ that ſuperior intelligence that has been beſtowed on

you

you by nature. Europe is perſuaded of the truth of what I ſay, and your majeſty's enemies, notwithſtanding their numbers, appear to be far from certain of their own ſucceſs. I know the diſcourſe they hold, becauſe I come from a country in which they have many partiſans. The only thing which could render your enemies victorious would be the death of your majeſty. You ought therefore, ſire, to think of your own preſervation; not only relative to yourſelf but for the intereſt of your people. With reſpect to myſelf, of all men in the world I have moſt reaſon to wiſh proſperity to your majeſty; for, were I unfortunate enough to loſe you, I would rather go and live in ſome Engliſh colony, of America, than return to France. I cannot expreſs to your majeſty all the injuſtice that has been done me, for ſome months paſt; and it was exceedingly fortunate that I immediately drew thirty-two thouſand livres, from Hamburg; for they refuſe, at preſent, to pay me the fifteen thouſand that became due the beginning of February. My brother writes me word that all he can do is to pay me the intereſt of the ſum, which he will keep till peace ſhall be concluded, and affairs aſſume a different face.

The farther to vex me, the king's people have denounced my *Philoſophie du Bon Sens** to the

* The philoſophy of good ſenſe.

parlia-

parliament of Paris, as an impious book; and it has been burnt by the hands of the hangman. The ſentence by which it was condemned was inſerted in all the foreign gazettes. Let me entreat your majeſty to recollect that this book has been printed three-and-twenty years; that it was publiſhed in Holland, conſequently in a country over which France has no juriſdiction; and that no man in France, till that moment, had thought proper to diſcover any thing contrary to good morals, or the Deity! Can more hatred or paſſion be ſhewn? But theſe people do not even endeavour to conceal their failings; for, by the ſame ſentence, they have condemned the poem of Voltaire *ſur la Religion Naturelle** to the flames; and they have had the inſolence to inſert in their ſentence, which they have cauſed to be printed—*A poem by the Sieur de Voltaire, dedicated to the king of Pruſſia.*

What afflicts me moſt is that, in deſpite of all theſe ſubjects of complaint, I am obliged to be ſilent, to diſſemble, and to wait for peace to claim what is my due; and likewiſe to wait for the patrimony of my mother, who is now more than eighty. But I can proteſt to your majeſty that, ſhould I have the misfortune to loſe you, I ſhould prefer being deprived of all I have in

* On natural religion.

the world, to the conſtraint of living in a country where indignities like theſe are authoriſed.

Were I twenty years younger, I ſhould aſk your majeſty's permiſſion to make a campaign in the army of prince Ferdinand.

I have the honour to be &c.

LETTER XX.

From the King,

Undated.

YOU will think it very ridiculous, my dear marquis, that I ſhould ſo long have promiſed you news without ſending you any. It is not, moſt aſſuredly, my fault, but rather the want of events, for which we muſt wait, and the diſtances which the couriers have to travel, before they can bring intelligence.

I have nothing to inform you of, either political or military, except that marſhal Daun has encamped his numerous army, and that I am ſtill in cantonments, but with one foot in the ſtirrup.

I hear ſome good news from Saxony, which is very agreeable to me; and I ſhould be ſtill more

more delighted had the blows been more deciſive. Great good fortune is neceſſary, for us to obtain any advantage over our enemies. For this I entreat Heaven; but, as I have not the protection of St. Simeon Stylites, nor of St. Anthony, nor of St. John Chryſoſtom, nor even of St. Fiacre*, I doubt whether Heaven will hear the prayer of a poor profane mortal, who has very little faith, and ſtill leſs inſpiration. As ſoon as I ſhall have any good news to ſend, you ſhall be informed of it immediately.

In the mean while, my dear marquis, I amuſe myſelf with the popes Nicholas and Adrian, the emperor Louis, king Lotharius, and with the ladies Teutberge and Valrade †. I am on the point of beholding a great ſchiſm ariſe in the

* Saint Coachy!—*Fiacre*, in the French language, ſignifies both hackney coach and hackney coachman. Smollet, in Letter IV. of his Travels, informs us St. Fiacre was the ſon of a Scotch king, who lived and died a hermit in France; and that the troops of Henry V. of England were ſaid to have pillaged the chapel of this Highland ſaint; who, in revenge, aſſiſted his countrymen in the French ſervice to defeat the Engliſh at Baugé; and afterward afflicted Henry with the piles, of which he died. This prince complained that he was not only plagued by the living Scots, but even perſecuted by thoſe who were dead. T.

† The king means, he was then reading de Fleury's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. T.

weſt, and am inclined to believe that the whole world has been fooliſh, from Conſtantine to Luther; diſputing, in an unintelligible jargon, concerning abſurd viſions; and epiſcopacy eſtabliſhing temporal power, aided by the credulity and the folly of princes and people. The conſequences of the hiſtory of religion, conſidered under this point of view, preſent a grand proſpect to the eye of the philoſopher, and become an inſtructive leſſon for all who are able to think, and to reflect on the human mind. The abbé de Fleury has really rendered truth and good ſenſe great ſervice, by compoſing his Hiſtory. You would write a moſt admirable book, my dear marquis, as it appears to me, were you to amaſs all the contradictions and all the abſurdities of divines; though you would undertake a moſt enormous work.

I will take your word for it that you are as good a Greek as Demoſthenes. You were before a formidable Grecian to me, who underſtand nothing more than the *Pater Hemon.* This was exceedingly apparent during the ſupper at which the duke de Nivernois was preſent, and when you ſupported one half of the converſation in Greek; while I called for a dictionary, that I might, in ſome manner, be able to underſtand the

the very learned words which you each of you threw in ſo a-propos.

For my part, I have not profited like you by this unhappy war: I am become a practical philoſopher. I have beſide forgotten the little I knew, and all I have learned is patiently to ſuffer ills which I cannot avoid.

Adieu, my divine marquis; you might have kept the new works of D'Alembert, which in truth are equal in value to our current coin*. I beg you will take care of your health, and remember your friends, who are impelled and haunted by a malignant ſpirit over the world, according to the caprice of the goblin.

Vale.

LETTER XXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 20, 1759.

YOU have indulged me in the liberty of occaſionally writing to you; I dare not, however, take this freedom ſo often as I wiſh, from

* How much the Pruſſian coin was debaſed, at this period, is well known. T.

the fear that I ſhould diſturb your majeſty in the important affairs concerning which you are inceſſantly occupied; but the good fortune of your arms in Bohemia, and the happy commencement of the campaign, inſpire me with too much joy to refrain from congratulating your majeſty. I daily become more convinced that, at the cloſe of this campaign, you will render your people contented and happy; and, after being crowned with glory, will paſs halcyon days at Potſdam and Sans-Souci, ſurrounded by the magnificent things you ſhall there perform and there collect.

I know you have difficulties to ſurmount which would aſtoniſh, and even incite deſpair in any other prince; but the ſame fortitude and prudence, which have hitherto been your ſupport, will lead you to a permanent and honourable peace. I regard you as the modern Hercules; you are obliged to act wonders. You combat againſt a hydra, but in the end you will cut off all its heads. I am not blind to the preſent ſituation of affairs; I know that they are in a very critical ſituation; but in fine, ſire, I judge of the future by the paſt, and I have no doubt but that a pleaſing calm will ſoon ſucceed to ſtorms ſo violent. I ſuppoſe the preſent league to reſemble that of Cambray; like which it will

will be productive of no ſtable effect, and will end in ſmoke.

Your majeſty is wrong to tell me that the miſfortunes of others are but dreams. I have ſeveral times repeated to your majeſty that my deſtiny is ſo much attached to your preſervation that, had I the unhappineſs to loſe you, God knows what would become of me! Certain it is I would rather travel into Jamaica, or Nova Scotia, than return to France. But a-propos of my moſt dear country! You have lately put more than thirty women in mourning, whom you have made widows by an exchange of priſoners. In revenge, however, you have dried up the ſource of fifty falſe reports, which thoſe gentlemen daily vented. Thus did they repay the civilities with which they were loaded.

I have received a letter from Voltaire, who had not written to me for theſe four years; but he could not reſiſt his deſire to know what I think of the reverend father Malagrida, and the other Portugueſe Jeſuits. What ſays your majeſty to theſe worthy people? The adventure of the king of Portugal is a fine leſſon for all ſovereigns, and eſpecially for proteſtant ſovereigns. It is really horrid that a Pope ſhould dare to ſupport ſuch infamous regicides; and that a monarch, whom they have attempted cruelly to

aſſaſſinate, dare not drive the principal authors of an act ſo flagrant out of his kingdom.

This is a fine ſubject on which to write a ſermon, in the character of a quaker, againſt all religions that maintain prieſts. Were I not ſtill incommoded, and continually in pain with my leg, I ſhould already have collected materials for a new pamphlet.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

I AM delighted to learn that you are ſafely harboured at Berlin. The journey to you was tremendous, and your campaign is over. I am in reality as impatient as you are to hear of the reduction of Caſſel; and I begin to fear that, in deſpite of all the advantage of prince Ferdinand, he will make a ſcholar's progreſs, and will loſe as faſt as he acquires.

The French are as mute as fiſh, and ſay not a word to the Engliſh. The opening of thec ampaign approaches, and will probably be attended with

with the like diſagreeable events and dangers as was the laſt. I own to you the thought renders me melancholy, and throws me into a revery whenever it enters my mind. I often ſay to myſelf—We cannot reſiſt the torrent of accidents which hurries us away, or that fatality which impels men, as winds agitate the ſands and the waves. There is little conſolation in the remembrance of this, but the die is caſt.

I thank you for the deſcription you have given me of Sans-Souci. God knows when I ſhall there ſet foot again! Yet what you have ſaid affords me great pleaſure. I remember the place as the Jews do Jeruſalem, or as Moſes did the holy land, toward which he wiſhed to lead the people of Iſrael, but which he himſelf was doomed never to enter.

What ſhall I ſay to you, my dear marquis, concerning the king of Portugal? N*** has every where done evil; and will continue ſo to do, ſo long as ſovereigns ſhall not, like Cæſar, be the pontiffs of their own dominions. Theſe people abuſe the name of religion with too much impunity; a name which ought to be the greateſt curb to crimes. They arm themſelves with the ſacred knife, which they ſnatch from the altar to cut the throats of kings, and, with the piety of the weak, to found or to extend

their avaricious and their ambitious deſires*. The conduct of the Pope, in this affair, is inconceivable. He muſt be an idiot, and his cardinal ſecretary a raſcal, that ought to be broken alive.

But what have we to do with ſuch people, at preſent? I am in greater pain for Caſſel, and my detachments, than for all the Jeſuits in the world. I have the difficult taſk which I have to fulfil inceſſantly before my eyes. All my arms are a great fund of good will and an inviolable attachment to the ſtate. In fine, I plunge with my eyes ſhut into an ocean, agitated by contending winds, without knowing on what ſhore I ſhall be caſt. This is the true ſtate of what relates to myſelf, and of all that I can augur for the future. I endeavour to affect tranquillity, but I would have you judge whether philoſophy can beſtow ſuch perfect apathy, on a man born with ſtrong paſſions.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Write to me often. Give my compliments to the good Babet, and be perſuaded of the eſteem in which I ſhall hold you during life.

* To *found deſires* is perhaps too bold a metaphor; though we do not ſcruple to ſay *build hopes*. T.

LETTER XXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, May 5, 1759.

I HAVE received the verſes which your majeſty did me the favour to ſend, How is it poſſible to be occupied by the command of an army, of a hundred thouſand men, and yet find time to write verſes ſo ingenious, and infinitely more correct than thoſe of La Fare and Chaulieu? You perform every thing you pleaſe; and I believe that, ſhould you take ſuch a whim, you would, at the ſame time, lay down an admirable plan of battle, and write as fine a ſermon as any written by Saurin.

I had ſeen, in all the public papers, an account of the toka * and the ſword, ſent by the Pope to marſhal Daun. I wiſhed to induce the gazette writer of Berlin to inſert, in his paper, that prince Ferdinand expected from London a hat and a ſword, conſecrated by the archbiſhop of Canterbury; and that the proteſtants made no doubt but that the Canterbury benediction would be more efficacious than the Roman. It is neceſſary to load the Auſtrians and French with ridicule, for they publiſh a hundred

* *Toque*—Cap or bonnet. T.

follies,

follies, which make much impreſſion, and are allowed ſo to proceed.

Inſtead of the wretched ſermons which our miniſters write, why do they not take occaſion to compoſe a paſtoral letter, in which they ſhould demonſtrate the total ruin of proteſtantiſm, ſhould the enemies of your majeſty unfortunately ſucceed in their deſigns. I could eaſily write a pamphlet on this ſubject; but ſuch a work muſt be written in German, to be diſperſed among the lower ranks, that it might be generally read. I have only met with one piece, in favour of the good cauſe, which is written with taſte; and this is the Letter on Libels. I immediately diſcovered your majeſty's hand, and I can aſſure you that, at the fiftieth line, I was as certain that you were the author of that work as if you yourſelf had told me ſo. It is tranſlated into German, and is thus rendered more uſeful.

I have an inclination to publiſh a monthly work, under the title of *Mercure de Harbourg* *, in which, without invective or bitterneſs, I would turn all the impertinences publiſhed by the enemy to ridicule. The work ſhould be printed in French and German. No perſon

* The Mercury of Harburg.

ſhould

ſhould know me to be the author, the tranſlator excepted; for the tranſlator would be as neceſſary a perſon as the author, ſince the people muſt be informed; and thoſe who ſpeak French in Germany are but few, comparatively to thoſe who underſtand only the German language.

Should your majeſty not diſapprove my project, I will begin as ſoon as I ſhall know your will. It appears to me that the plan might be uſeful, for the publication of ſome pieces which your majeſty amuſes yourſelf in writing, and which I ſhould inſert in the *Mercure de Harbourg*, as coming from authors under ſuch names as it ſhall pleaſe your majeſty to ſign.

I am not aſtoniſhed at the follies and impertinences of ſeveral French officers, for this I had foreſeen; and your majeſty may recollect I had the honour to aſk you, at Breſlau, why you had the complaiſance to ſend a number of hair-brained youths to the capital? Thank Heaven, I was not acquainted with any one of them, during the reſidence they made in that city. May God keep them merry at Spandau. All I have to ſay to your majeſty is that we no longer daily hear thoſe rumours which had no foundation in truth, but which however did not fail, for two or three days, to alarm all the worthy people in Berlin.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, May 17, 1759.

I NEVER read any thing ſo pleaſant as your Pope's Brief, and your Letter from the prince de Soubiſe. I am perſuaded the very enemies of your majeſty muſt be obliged to confeſs they have never met with any thing more ingenious.

I have changed the plan of my work, and the title. I ſhall aſſume the following, which appears to me more intereſting, and more conformable to my ideas——*Memoires de l'Academie des Nouvelliſtes du Café de St. James* *.—I feign that ſome Engliſhmen have formed a ſociety, or club, in which each is obliged to read, to the members aſſembled, ſome political pieces. This will be the means of introducing, at each meeting of the pretended academy, whatever ſatires I ſhall pleaſe. The title of my work will furniſh me likewiſe with an occaſion of turning many things to ridicule; and I ſhall endeavour to write a book ſuch as ſhall be intereſting

* Memoirs of the Academy of the News-Mongers of St. James's Coffee-houſe.

enough

enough to be read when the war ſhall be ended, and the pleaſure of novelty loſt. In fine, ſire, ſhould you be pleaſed to aid, and give effect to my plan, by ſending me what you ſhall write in your moments of leiſure, I am convinced that my work will ſucceed. I ſuppoſe that, in ſeven or eight days, I ſhall be able to ſend your majeſty the firſt part printed.

The Pope's Brief appears to me to be ſo pleaſant that I ſhall tranſlate it into Latin, and ſhall print it in two columns, the Latin on one ſide and the French on the other. This will impart the greater air of truth to it, becauſe the briefs of the Pope are always written in Latin, when they are addreſſed to the Imperial court, or to its miniſters.

At the moment that I have the honour to write to your majeſty, a report is ſpread through the city that prince Henry has entered Nuremberg, and that your majeſty has repulſed and beaten a heavy body of Auſtrians. I am perſuaded, ſire, you will do whatever is neceſſary in this campaign to vanquiſh your enemies, on all ſides; and I doubt not but I ſhall have the happineſs again to ſee you tranquil at Potſdam, at the cloſe of the year, crowned with glory, and in the enjoyment of perfect health; for, according to my creed, the latter article is as neceſſary, to the

happineſs of heroes, as it is to the peace of us, poor, ſimple, mortals.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Reich Hennerſdorff, May 28, 1759.

I AM ſo occupied, here, by our heroic follies, that I very much fear I ſhall be able to afford you but feeble aſſiſtance, in your praiſe-worthy project.

I have not beaten the enemy, becauſe I have had no opportunity. To perform my taſk will be very difficult. The enemy I have to face, fronting Sileſia, is ninety thouſand ſtrong; to oppoſe whom I have but fifty thouſand men. Perplexity will begin to be felt as ſoon as the army ſhall enter the field; and much addreſs, art, and valour are neceſſary, to eſcape the dangers by which we are menaced.

My brother has not ſent troops to Nuremberg, for it would have been very erroneous in him to have marched thus far, under our preſent circumſtances. He ought, on the contrary, haſtily

haſtily to regain Saxony, that he may ſend a detachment againſt the Ruſſians. We have yet no cauſe to ſing Te Deum, nor can we preſage the future. The great impediment, the gordian knot, awaits us; and we muſt ſee what will be the will of fate, relative to future events. Be it what it may, it will not derange my philoſophy.

With reſpect to my health and content of heart, theſe are things on which I do not think, and which are to me very indifferent. I perceive, my dear marquis, you like the public are miſled. My ſituation may at a diſtance caſt a certain ſplendour; but approach, and you will find nothing but groſs and thick ſmoke. I ſcarcely any longer know whether there be ſuch a place as Sans-Souci in the world; be it ſituated where it will, the term no longer is applicable to me*. In fine, my dear marquis, I am old, gloomy, and haraſſed. Some rays of my former good humour occaſionally dart into my mind; but they are ſparks which expire, wanting the furnace whence more ſhall be emitted. They are flaſhes of lightning that burſt through the black and ſtormy clouds. I tell you the truth. Were you to ſee me you would no longer find the traces of the man I formerly was. You would behold grey-headed age, that has loſt half

* *Sans Souci* means *without care.* T.

his teeth; is deſtitute of gaiety, fire, and imagination; and is leſs than the Tuſculan remains of which architects have formed ſo many imaginary plans, not finding any ruins which could indicate the foundation of the abode of Cicero.

Such, my dear marquis, are the effects rather of grief than of increaſing years; ſuch are the mournful approaches of decay, which the autumn of life infallibly brings. Theſe reflections, which render me exceedingly careleſs concerning death, inſpire me with preciſely thoſe propenſities which a man ought to have, who is fated to fight to the laſt extremity. With this indifference for life, we combat with greater courage, and quit the world without regret.

For your part, my dear marquis, not being in the paths of blood, preſerve your good humour till ſome juſt cauſe for affliction ſhall aſſault you, and mortify our enemies with your pen; while I will employ all the abilities I poſſeſs to confound them, by the ſharp ſword and the thundering cannon.

Adieu, dear marquis. May Heaven preſerve you in peace, and take you into its holy keeping!

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, June 18, 1759.

I SHOULD have done myſelf the honour to write to your majeſty ſooner, could I have haſtened the printers. But the delays of theſe people are eternal. I have for ſome days ſuſpended my Memoirs of the Academy of Newſmongers, becauſe I have ſuppoſed I might write ſomething more effectual in a ſerious ſtyle. Here are two Letters, under the fictitious name of a miniſter of the goſpel. In the firſt, I have attempted to prove that the object of the houſe of Auſtria, and of France, has at all times been to annihilate the reformation; and, in the ſecond, have ſhewn that theſe two powers ſuppoſe the preſent to be the moment, for the execution of their plan.

Did I poſſeſs that ardent and perſuaſive eloquence which nature has ſo liberally beſtowed upon you, I ſhould have been able to have written ſomething better; but, excluſive of the mediocrity of talents which has been granted me, the weakneſs of my body has communicated itſelf to my mind, and my underſtanding is almoſt as much enervated as my frame. I

have endeavoured to ſupply the defects of the orator by the expreſſion of truth. I have had recourſe to unadorned reaſon, not being able ſo to ornament it as to render it more convincing. This has occaſioned the work to find favour in the eyes of its readers; and, ſince the Letters have been more ſucceſsful than I dared flatter myſelf they would have been, I intend to publiſh five or ſix more, ſhould I have ſtrength enough for their compoſition.

I have the honour to ſend your majeſty the Pope's Brief, with a Latin tranſlation. There is more Attic ſalt, and more imagination, in this piece, than in all that has been or will be publiſhed, during the courſe of the preſent war.

No one knows that I am the author of the Letters which I have the honour to ſend your majeſty; of this the printer himſelf is ignorant. M. de Beauſobre alone is in the ſecret, for he is charged with correcting the preſs. I entreat your majeſty not to name me, for the world is perſuaded they are really written by a miniſter of the goſpel; and we ſhall loſe all the good effects that might be expected, ſhould it be known they are the production of an author whoſe books have been burnt, in various countries, becauſe of their irreligion.

I have great need to drink the mineral waters

of

of Sans-Souci, if you will be pleaſed to permit me to go there for a fortnight. I wiſh to new-line my poor caſe, which begins to be very much worn. The phyſicians aſſure me the waters and the excerciſe of the journey will do me much good. I here go out in a carriage, but they wiſh me to walk.

I have not yet publiſhed the Letter of the prince de Soubiſe, becauſe I keep it for my Memoirs of the Newſmongers, which I ſhall begin to write as ſoon as I have compoſed two more Letters of the Goſpel-miniſter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOUR two Letters, my dear marquis, are of more worth than a victory. The plan is admirable. I only could wiſh you had been informed of an anecdote reſpecting the ſecond; which is that France cauſed it to be declared, to the republic of Holland, that ſhe really had an intention to invade England, but that the Pretender was not to have any part in the affair.

This little inadvertency may eaſily be corrected; and it is only neceſſary to ſay that France would not name the Pretender, leſt ſhe ſhould caſt an odium on her entreprize; yet was unable to make the attempt, except in his favour.

You laugh, my dear marquis, at me, and my Pope's Brief. To compare it to your Letters is to ſuppoſe one of Rouſſeau's epigrams equal to the Eneid. I know my own worth; my frozen northern fancy cannot in any manner run parallel with your Provençal imagination. The frogs of Aix have more ardour of mind than my dear countrymen. We dare not pretend to it; we are exceedingly happy if but twice in our lives we ſhould be thought to poſſeſs a little good ſenſe. You take wing and fly, while I hobble on crutches. Do not, from your ſublime heights, inſult my poverty; and ſuffer me to crawl after you, along that road over which you haſten with ſuch rapid ſpeed.

I ſhall not betray your ſecret. You know the firſt prayer of politicians is addreſſed to the God of myſtery. For my own part, wretch as I am, and obliged by duty to act as others, and not as I myſelf ſhall pleaſe, I have ſtudied in that ſchool the art of containing my tongue within the limits of my teeth, and conſequently your goſpel holineſs has no need to fear I ſhall ever divulge the

author

author of Letters which the pious effects of your zeal for proteſtantiſm have produced.

I have ſome dozen of points to obſerve in my preſent ſituation, which ſo much occupy my mind that it is impoſſible for me to furniſh any materials for irony. The premature campaign which Daun announced will be reduced to *ſemper auguſtus*; an epithet which in former wars was beſtowed on the Auſtrian arms.

Go to Sans-Souci, my dear marquis. You know that my houſe, and all that fortune has left me, are very much at your ſervice; and, in payment for your lodging, I deſire you to write me word in what ſtate you find my gallery, and whether the old gardens and the Chineſe have made any remarkable progreſs, during the four years ſince laſt I ſaw them.

Adieu, my dear marquis; drink the waters; work and write in behalf of the good cauſe. Take care not to forget your old friends, accurſed of God though they be, no doubt, ſince they are condemned to continual warfare.

LETTER XXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, July 5, 1759.

YOUR approbation of my work originates in exceſſive indulgence; my only merit is that of unaffected zeal, and your majeſty is pleaſed to encourage me becauſe you perceive I poſſeſs this zeal. I immediately corrected the miſtake which you pointed out; and in a new Letter, which I have the honour to ſend you, I have purſued the hint which you were pleaſed to give.

The firſt part of this third Letter I have employed to ſhew that France could have no other views than thoſe of acting in favour of the Pretender, though ſhe endeavoured to conceal them; and in the ſecond part I have refuted the arguments which I heard employed, at Hamburg, to convince the Germans and ſome Dutch merchants. I have particularly inſiſted on the abſurdity that men ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be deceived, by the extravagant praiſes beſtowed on the queen of Hungary, and the king of France; becauſe I have met with many people who were the dupes of theſe praiſes. I flatter myſelf

myſelf your majeſty will find I have treated this ſubject with all poſſible moderation. I endeavour to aſſume an air of impartiality, which may be more convincing than too much ardour. It gives me pleaſure to perceive that the Letters ſell in the German language; for this may render them uſeful, and without this the utility would be very trifling. I am no more known to the tranſlator than he is to me. Every body here is perſuaded that the Letters are really written by a goſpel-miniſter; or at leaſt by ſome good proteſtant.

I thank your majeſty for your kindneſs, in permitting me to drink the waters of Sans-Souci. I will not fail to write to your majeſty immediately on my arrival, and to inform you of every thing you wiſh to know. May I ſoon have the happineſs to ſee you crowned with glory, and in the enjoyment of perfect tranquillity, in theſe beauteous abodes, which you ſtill continue to embelliſh.

To the French Letters I add two copies of the two firſt in German, ſhould your majeſty, by chance, wiſh to have them read by ſome one who does not underſtand the French language.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

After the loſs of the battles of Zulichau and Cunerſdorff.

SIRE, Berlin, Auguſt 14, 1759.

NOTHING has happened to you but what has happened to Cæſar, Turenne, and ſeveral times to the great Condé. If you will but recover poſſeſſion of yourſelf, take care of your health, and employ thoſe reſources which your own intelligence will ſupply, every thing will ſoon be reſtored to order. My grief is extreme that I cannot be preſent with you, inceſſantly to repeat what I have now the honour to write. In the name of your people, in the name of your glory, which will ever remain immortal, in deſpite of the vexatious accidents which may happen to you, do not yield to emotions which injure your health, and are more deſtructive to your people than the loſs of many battles. Recollect that Louis XIV. ſuffered the greateſt reverſe of fortune, by ſupporting which with firmneſs he acquired more grandeur than by having conquered numerous provinces. What is your intention? To defend your kingdom; and, ſhould this kingdom be deprived of you, it will, without reſource,

be eternally loſt. Peace made on certain occaſions is neither ſhameful nor prejudicial. Where is the prince, or hero, who has not ſometimes been forced to yield to the torrent of accidents?

In fine, ſire, you know I adore you. Should you periſh, your people will eternally accuſe you as the author of their misfortunes; ſhould you live, let affairs take what turn they may, they will worſhip you; for you alone can ſave the ſtate from the wretchedneſs into which it would fall, ſhould you be cut off. Excuſe, ſire, the liberty I take, which is pardonable in a man who, had he a hundred lives, would give them all with pleaſure, to render you happy.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Auguſt, 18, 1759.

I NEITHER have quitted nor have I thought of quitting Berlin. So long as I ſhall know you to be in good health, I ſhall not have the leaſt fear, becauſe I am aſſured that, notwithſtanding the accidents that may happen, while you ſhall preſerve your perſon, which is ſo precious

precious to the ſtate, affaris, however vexatious they may appear, will ſoon or late take a fortunate turn. Think ſeriouſly therefore, ſire, on what muſt happen ſhould you periſh. I dare not here retrace the fearful picture; but, if you do but live, affairs muſt aſſume a different face to that which they at preſent wear. The Engliſh, now hold the guarantee of the countries of which your enemies think to rob you; and the general peace cannot but be favourable to you, in deſpite of the advantages which your enemies ſeem to gain.

I well know how ſenſibly you muſt feel their march into your provinces; but, ſince all Europe is convinced your fame cannot be diminiſhed, you ought to conſole yourſelf; and, happen what will, to think of your own preſervation, ſince on you alone depend the remedies that are to be applied to the preſent ills.

If your majeſty will permit me the honour of coming to join you, I will depart with the firſt eſcort that ſhall leave Berlin, from which place eſcorts are almoſt daily marching, and will remain with you during the reſt of the campaign. My health is paſſable, and I am able to ride on horſeback; I therefore ſhall not be in the leaſt troubleſome to your majeſty. I wait your anſwer.

Once more let me conjure you to be careful of yourſelf, and not too ſenſibly to feel that reverſe of fortune which the greateſt heroes have often encountered. Nothing can be more grand than the proſcribed and fugitive Marius braving fate. Sertorius ſhut up in a corner of Spain, ſupporting the caprices of fortune with equal patience and reſolution, appears to me the greateſt of the Romans; and Cato in Utica is conſidered but as a feeble ſoul incapable of reſiſting adverſity.

I hope, ſire, all will go better than you imagine, that it will not be long before you recover the advantage you have ſo often poſſeſſed over your enemies. I found my hopes on my knowledge of the talents of your majeſty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

From the King.

Undated.

I YESTERDAY wrote to you to come, which to-day I forbid. Daun is at Cotbus, and is on his march for Luben and Berlin. Fly theſe

theſe unfortunate countries. This intelligence obliges me to attack the Ruſſians again, between here and Frankfort. You may well imagine it is a deſperate reſolution. I have no other reſource to prevent being cut off from Berlin, on one ſide or on the other. I have ordered brandy to be diſtributed to the diſcouraged men, that I may by this means inſpire them with more bravery; but I do not promiſe myſelf any ſucceſs. My only conſolation is the determination to die ſword in hand.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Once again fly, and wait the event, that you may provide for your own ſafety, in caſe of misfortune. I thank you for the attachment which you teſtify; and you may be certain I ſhall preſerve a grateful remembrance of it to my laſt ſigh.

LETTER XXXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Auguſt 21, 1759.

I AM in deſpair at not being with you; but, ſince ſuch are your commands, I ſhall depart to the diſtance of ſome miles from Berlin, and

and ſhall wait at Tangermunde for news of the victory which you will gain over your enemies. Your infantry neither wanted good-will nor valour; but the exceſſive heat on the day of battle exhauſted their ſtrength, of which nature has only granted a certain portion to men, who, be they as courageous as they will, never can riſe ſuperior to this ſame nature. I am convinced they will repair their fault on the firſt opportunity, and that you will again find them to be true Pruſſian ſoldiers. Though fortune have for once turned her back, ſhe has not therefore forſaken you. As ſoon as you ſhall think of the preſervation of yourſelf, affairs will ſoon recover a ſmiling face.

How ardently do I wiſh to be with you! I have a million of things to ſay to you; and would prove to you, in ſpite of your affliction, that your loſs alone can incur that of the ſtate. Live; take care of yourſelf; and, be the ſtate of affairs what it may, it will ſoon or late become favourable. And even, ſire, had the loſs of a battle led the enemy to Berlin, which however did not happen, would there have been no longer any hope, becauſe we muſt have paid a contribution? Recollect, ſire, that prince Ferdinand may when he pleaſes enter Franconia, and lay waſte thoſe diſtricts of the Empire which are averſe

averſe to us; by which means he would oblige a part of the Auſtrians to haſten toward Bohemia.

You have ſuffered loſs, but the loſs of your enemies is ſtill greater. I know the ſenſibility of your majeſty, and this is what I fear more than your foes. I own it is very vexatious that a king, who expoſes his perſon more than his private men, ſhould be abandoned by thoſe very men; but in fine, ſire, they will act wonders on the firſt occaſion. Every thing will be repaired; and they will thus act, becauſe I am convinced your majeſty will bring them to a ſenſe of their duty by the hope of reward, and the aſſurance of no more remembering the paſt.

I have anſwered M. Bernouilli, according to the commands your majeſty has been pleaſed to give me.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Wolfenbuttle, September 9, 1759.

I MEAN to return to Berlin, there to wait your majeſty's orders; and am ever ready to go wherever you wiſh. I entreat you, ſire, to pay no regard to my health; were it weaker than

than it is, it would acquire ſtrength the firſt moment I ſhould have the happineſs to ſee you.

When I came to Tangermunde, the town was ſo full of ſtrangers that it was impoſſible to find a lodging; nor would I remain in the villages becauſe of ſmall parties from the army of the Empire, which hovered in the environs of Magdeburg and Halberſtadt; and I continued my route as far as Wolfenbuttle, where I now am, and which place I ſhall leave to-morrow.

I have never doubted but that your majeſty would ſoon repair the check you met with, in the laſt battle; and am convinced all will finally be well, and much better than you ſuppoſe, provided you will but preſerve your perſon. In you alone concenters the ſafety of the ſtate.

Your majeſty has no doubt ſeen the letter of marſhal de Belleiſle, which was found at Detmold, among the papers of marſhal de Contades. Nothing can be more ſhocking than the project of renewing the horrors of the Palatinate in the electorate of Hanover, and to render it "a deſert before the month of September," for ſuch are the very words of M. de Belleiſle. This man will become the bye word of all worthy people, let them be of what party they will.

I have no doubt but the king of England will hereafter think ſeriouſly of the affairs of Germany;

Germany; he knows at preſent what he is to expect from his enemies. What would become of his German provinces, ſhould you unfortunately ſink under your burthen? If this letter have diſcovered the inordinate ſpirit of revenge of the French miniſtry, it has alſo diſcovered the wretched ſtate of their finances; ſince the marſhal writes that, without the contributions which Fiſcher is to raiſe, it is impoſſible to provide for the immediate wants of the army. What then will be the conſequence ſhould the Engliſh ſtrike ſome bold ſtroke, before the end of the year?

I have no doubt but you have ſtill many labours and pains to ſupport, before the cloſe of the campaign. But, in order to bring things to a happy iſſue, you have not any need to vanquiſh, but to temporiſe. Defenſive war is the ruin of your foes. The campaign muſt end in ſix weeks, and froſt and ſnow will offer you reſt. How can your enemies exiſt in a country where they have neither proviſions nor magazines? What immenſe ſums muſt the French procure, for the ſupplies of the next year; that they may continue the war, and pay the ſubſidies of their allies, who without theſe ſame ſubſidies cannot act!

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

From the King.

Cotbus, September 17, 1759.

BERLIN at length is out of danger. The Ruſſians are at Guben and at Forſt; but I ſtill am ſurrounded by cruel perplexities, ſnares, and gulphs. It is very eaſy, my dear marquis, to ſay—"We muſt make defenſive war;" but the number of my enemies is ſo great that I am of neceſſity obliged to act offenſively. I am here in a triangle, with the Ruſſians on my left, Daun on my right, and the Swedes in my rear—"Make defenſive war, I conjure you."—The very contrary has happened: I have hitherto ſupported myſelf only by attacking, whenever I could find an opportunity, and by procuring ſmall advantages, which it has been my endeavour to increaſe as much as poſſible.

I have, ſince the war, ſerved an apprenticeſhip to Zenoniſm; and, ſhould the ſame train continue, I ſhall become more indifferent, more paſſive, than Empedocles, or than Zeno himſelf.

No, my dear marquis, I do not require you to come and join me here. Should I live, I do not expect to ſee you till winter ſhall have form-

ed a good ſix months truce, before which period there is much blood ſtill to be ſpilt, and many good and ill accidents which muſt inform us what is to be our deſtiny.

Adieu. I embrace you, my dear marquis.

LETTER XXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Sept. 29, 1759.

I KNEW your majeſty poſſeſſed all the qualities of Cæſar, but knew not that you added thoſe of the great admiral de Coligni, who was more feared, more admired, and more formidable to his foes, after than before the loſs of a battle. Your affairs are now entirely recovered, or nearly ſo. Your army yielded the palm of victory to your enemies; but your genius has deprived them of the fruits they might have expected to reap by their advantage.

While you are reſtoring affairs ſo as to put a fortunate end to the campaign, the Engliſh are haſtening the approach of peace, by the deſtruction of the French fleet. No longer have the latter a ſingle ſhip in the whole Mediterranean, and

and the Engliſh may there give law with a ſingle ſquadron of three or four veſſels.

The pretended invaſion of England is vaniſhed in ſmoke. Canada too muſt be loſt; for I have no doubt but that Quebec is taken, at this very moment that I have the honour to write to your majeſty. The Breſt fleet dares not leave the harbour; the French are too ſenſible that, ſhould it be beaten, their marine will be totally ruined and annihilated. All their colonies, in Africa and America, and every coaſt of the kingdom itſelf, are at the mercy of the Engliſh. Where can France apply for money to furniſh the ſupplies, and thoſe expences into which they have entered with ſo much profuſion? The parliaments obſtinately refuſe to enregiſter the new taxes. In fine, the defeat of the fleet of De la Clue has coſt five thouſand ſailors, taken or drowned; a loſs which twenty years cannot repair.

When all theſe circumſtances are conſidered, it is but natural to conclude that, ſhould the Engliſh offer the French a peace in the leaſt reaſonable, the latter will accept it, and will forſake their allies, ſhould they be unwilling to concur in promoting the general tranquillity. I am perſuaded, ſire, that the French have already renounced ſeizing on the electorate of Hanover;

for all the ſteps they now make are but vain oſtentation. *The deſert* of the marſhal de Belleiſle is a chimera, which the battle of Minden muſt have cauſed to vaniſh from the ſight of the miniſtry of Verſailles. Add to all this that froſt and ſnow will be here in three weeks. Recollect the advantages which have been gained by prince Henry and general Finck, and your majeſty will allow I have reaſon to affirm that the end of the campaign will ſoon afford the Engliſh a means of offering the French a peace, which, if it be not very unreaſonable, they muſt, pleaſed or diſpleaſed, be obliged to accept. I have always thought, and ſtill am firmly convinced, that the cataſtrophe of the monſtrous league, which is formed againſt your majeſty, will reſemble that of Cambray.

In fine, ſire, all will be well, provided you take care of your perſon, which is ſo precious to your people, and with the preſervation of which both the ſafety of your ſubjects and the happineſs of all Germany are connected.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 6, 1759.

A WOMAN who calls herſelf madam Tagliazuchi, and whom I never was acquainted with, wrote to me yeſterday, and addreſſed herſelf to me, that I ſhould inform your majeſty ſhe has things of the utmoſt conſequence to reveal, and ſuch as directly relate to yourſelf. I immediately ſent for her, and ſhe told me ſhe was the wife of the poet who writes the operas. My firſt queſtion was whether what ſhe knew related to any conſpiracy againſt your majeſty; ſhe anſwered no, but that what ſhe had to declare was, however, of the utmoſt importance, though it did not relate to the ſacred perſon of your majeſty. I put many queſtions to her, but could not prevail upon her to anſwer any explicitly. Her continual reply was ſhe would confide her ſecret to none but your majeſty, or to ſome one to whom your majeſty ſhould, by letter to me, command her to addreſs herſelf.

Though this woman endeavoured to make a myſtery of the buſineſs, I think I have diſco-

vered by the croſs queſtions which I put to her, what her ſecret is; and theſe are my thoughts.

She is by birth a ſubject of the queen of Hungary, and is often in company here with foreign officers, eſpecially Italians. Some one of theſe officers imagined her capable of maintaining a correſpondence, and of ſending intelligence to the court of Vienna. Whether the woman were at firſt ſeduced, and whether the fear of what might happen may have cauſed her to change her opinion; or whether ſhe have acted only to deceive the court of Vienna, and to make a merit of her conduct to you; it is certain that ſhe told me, during our converſation, that ſhe had in her poſſeſſion pieces of great importance. I have no doubt even but that ſhe will deliver up the cyphers, with which ſhe has been furniſhed, by the court of Vienna, through the medium of thoſe who were commiſſioned to corrupt her; and theſe cyphers may be of utility to your majeſty to decypher other letters.

I am led to believe ſhe has cyphers, becauſe, when I told her that ſhe acted very prudently in remaining faithful to your majeſty, for that her treachery would ſoon have been diſcovered had ſhe entered into any correſpondence with the court of Vienna, unleſs ſhe had a cypher, ſhe

anſwered

anſwered that this would have been no difficulty, had ſhe thought proper to fail in her duty.

In fine, ſhould your majeſty be pleaſed to name any perſon to whom this woman may addreſs herſelf, you will ſoon be informed of the whole; I therefore entreat your majeſty to ſend me orders how to act; for ſhe preſſes me for an anſwer from your majeſty, and aſſures me that what ſhe has to diſcover is of great conſequence, and will not admit of delay. Should it happen that all this is only the fumes of an Italian brain, which may be over-heated, and may have miſtaken illuſion for truth, as may very poſſibly be, for the woman appeared nothing leſs than prudent and calm, I ſtill think that the trouble taken to know what ſhe has to declare will be ſo trifling that it will not be regretted, even ſhould it be diſcovered that ſhe is but a lunatic.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 12, 1759.

I SHOULD have profited but little had I, after a reſidence of twenty years among the cool and ſenſible Germans, preſerved a Provençal imagination. By the memorial which madam Tagliazuchi has remitted to me, your majeſty will find what is the ſubject in queſtion, and determine accordingly. Had you, ſire, not written to me in expreſs terms—"Let this woman ſay what ſhe will, beware how you give credit to her aſſertions"—I ſhould have deſired the governor to arreſt a perſon named Ranuzzi, till you ſhould have ſent orders what was further to be done with him, for this man indubitably appears to me to be a ſpy. But I ſatisfied myſelf with declaring to madam Tagliazuchi that, ſhould this man leave Berlin before the arrival of your majeſty's anſwer, ſhe ſhould be reſponſible; and ſhe aſſured me ſhe would detain him.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOU ſee, my dear marquis, that the ſecrets of madam Tagliazuchi were indeed of a trifling nature, as I had predicted. I have given commands, however, that this tremendous corrupter, this knave, ſhould be arreſted. To know my ſecrets it were neceſſary to corrupt me myſelf, which is no eaſy thing; neither could the man give the enemy any intelligence except ſuch as muſt be derived from muddy ſources, rather proper to daub than brighten.

I am here in the ſame ſituation that I was a week ago; but the enemy means ſoon to depart and is making every preparation for a march. This will put an end to my preſent campaign againſt the Ruſſians; but I have ſtill a difficult taſk to perform. I am not well, but that ſhall not prevent me from faithfully performing my duties, while I have any ſtrength remaining.

I am ſtill at work on Charles XII. My compoſition will only be a chain of reflections, ſuch as require to be written with care and with a mind at eaſe; ſo that I proceed but ſlowly. I firſt conceived

conceived the idea by finding myſelf preciſely on the ſpot which Shulenburg has rendered famous, by his retreat. With my mind inceſſantly occupied by military thoughts, I found I could better fix my attention on this than on any other ſubject.

The war ended, I will petition for a place among the invalids, for I am reduced to one of their number. Should you ever ſee me again, you will find me much older; my hairs are grey, I loſe my teeth, and I ſhall no doubt ſoon be in my dotage. We ought not to preſs too much upon the ſpring, the effort of reſiſtance of which may totally deſtroy its elaſticity. You know what is related of Blaiſe Paſcal. You yourſelf have told me that you had ſo much exhauſted yourſelf in Holland, by writing, that long reſt was neceſſary to recover your powers. Your predeceſſor, Bayle, experienced the ſame thing. I, unworthy as I am to tie your ſhoe-ſtrings, though this has not yet happened to me, feel my infirmities increaſe, my ſtrength decay, and I progreſſively loſe the ardor which is neceſſary for the taſk I have undertaken.

A long month is ſtill to come before the campaign will be ended, and we muſt wait to ſee what winter will bring. In the mean time ſend me the Revolutions of Rome and Sweden by the abbé

abbé Vertot. Forget not your friends in purgatory, and reſt perſuaded of my eſteem and friendſhip.

Adieu, marquis.

LETTER XXXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

SIRE, Berlin, October 20, 1759.

WHEN I praiſe the conduct of your majeſty truth dictates my diſcourſe, nor has the courtier any part in what I ſay. Permit me therefore to repeat that nothing can be more fine than your laſt march into Sileſia; and this, I am convinced, your very enemies will allow.

I am much afflicted to hear that you are indiſpoſed, and, did I dare to requeſt a particular favour from your majeſty, it would be to relieve me from the cruel apprehenſions under which I labour, and to ſend me news of your health. I hope you have only a cold, which is eaſily caught at this ſeaſon of the year.

I impatiently wait to read your work on Charles XII. How can you affirm that your genius decays? The very manner in which you expreſs

preſs yourſelf demonſtrates it has loſt nothing either of its ſtrength or its charms. If you wiſh to be believed, you muſt determine neither to ſpeak nor write.

Your letter I received on Saturday evening, and cannot obtain, from the bookſeller Neaulme, the Revolutions of Rome and Sweden before Monday morning. They ſhall be ſent without fail. I think the campaign exceedingly tedious, and wiſh for the happineſs of throwing myſelf at your majeſty's feet. I am inconſolable that you did not ſuffer me to go to Furſtenwalde.

I hope the winter will bring peace. The French have once again been totally defeated in the Eaſt Indies, and have been obliged to abandon Fort St. David. Their moſt conſiderable places are taken, and their affairs are in as ruinous a ſtate in the Eaſt as in the Weſt Indies. This intelligence is certain, for it has been brought by three ſhips, which have arrived ſucceſſively at London. Should England pleaſe, peace is indubitable.

Your majeſty may ſay that the French may withdraw themſelves from the alliance, and the other powers may continue the war. But who will pay the Barbarians? Who will afford ſubſidies to the enemies of Stralſund? Did ever the

houſe

houſe of Auſtria make war, except with the money of the Dutch and the Engliſh? Should the court of Vienna continue the war, the army of prince Ferdinand may penetrate to the gates of Vienna, having nothing more to fear from the French. What pleaſure will the king of England then take in mortifying a queen who, forgetful of all her obligations to him, wiſhed to aid an army that intended to make a deſert of his electorate, and to favour a deſcent on England to the deſtruction of his throne and family! Attempts of ſuch a nature never are forgotten, whatever route policy may take. I have continually been free enough to declare to your majeſty that, ſhould France quit this alliance, which ſhe will for thirty years regret ever having contracted, the remainder of the league will ſoon be diſſolved.

Your majeſty may ſee, in the firſt letter I had the honour to write, relative to madam Tagliazuchi, that I regarded that woman as a lunatic, as a perſon of indifferent character. But it is nevertheleſs true that the ſaid Ranuzzi, whom you have ordered to be arreſted, was a ſpy ſent by Daun, whoſe intention it was, on leaving Berlin, to go to your army; and that madam Tagliazuchi would have acted very properly had ſhe turned him out of doors the moment ſhe knew

knew his deſigns, without entering into ſo many parleys, which perhaps are not ſo innocent as the good lady pretends. In fine, I thank your majeſty, for having rid me of all thoſe artifices which began to fatigue my peaceful philoſophy.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XL.

From the King.

Undated.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear marquis, under the tortures of the gout; and remembered that the philoſopher Poſidonius, when Pompey paſſed through Athens, and ſent to enquire whether he could liſten to him without inconvenience, replied—"It never ſhall "be ſaid that a man ſo great as Pompey "wiſhes to hear me, and that the gout was "any impediment." The philoſopher then made Pompey a fine diſcourſe on the contempt of pain, while he occaſionally exclaimed—"Oh Pain! Do what thou wilt, thou never ſhalt "make me confeſs thou art an evil."—I imitate Poſidonius, and now anſwer you, whoſe character

ter is of more worth than that of all the Pompeys collectively.

You enquire what is my diſeaſe, my dear marquis, and I reply, I am deprived of the uſe of my left arm, my two feet, and my right knee. My right hand, which is the only member I can at preſent make free uſe of, is employed in writing to you, and in deſiring you to come to Glogau. I ſhall order myſelf to be carried tomorrow to * * *, which is half a mile diſtant from this place.

You may eaſily calculate, after combining the various misfortunes of war, diſeaſe, the loſs of friends, and the inability of action where action is moſt neceſſary, that this aſſemblage of circumſtances is not very pleaſant. You have nothing to fear; the Ruſſians go to Poſen, and from thence to Thorn. The road hither is ſafe through Berlin, Frankfort, and Croſſen; you may therefore travel as in times of perfect peace.

Adieu, my dear marquis; my great weakneſs will not ſuffer me to write more.

LETTER XLI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 28, 1759.

YOUR majeſty's letter I received this Sunday morning, the 28th, and will not fail to depart the day after to-morrow, the 30th; I ſhall arrive at Glogau at the time that you will come there. However weak I may be, in this wintery weather, I would travel on foot over the whole earth to have the pleaſure of ſeeing you. I fear leſt you ſhould order yourſelf to be carried too ſoon to Glogau. Should you happen to renew your cold, it may prolong your diſeaſe.

I am very ſenſible you muſt be vexed that you cannot in perſon finiſh the campaign; but you may give your commands for the execution of thoſe things which you yourſelf would have done, had your health permitted. Beſide, in a fortnight, if you are careful of your health, you will be able to ſupport the motion of a carriage, and you may order yourſelf to be taken whereever you pleaſe. In fine, there are things which are above the ſtrength of man, and the beſt remedy for which is to recollect that they cannot be avoided.

You muſt have received the news of the taking of Quebec two or three days ſince. Thus is all North America loſt to France; and the Engliſh may, this winter, tranſport near ten thouſand men to Europe, with more than thirty ſhips of war, and ſtill leave ſufficient to take Martinico in the month of March. Believe me, ſire, you will this winter ſee the French abandon all their allies, and conſequently we ſhall have peace in the ſpring, and ſhall go to Sans-Souci, to ſee the gallery which will be there, and which the inſpector of the pictures, who came yeſterday from Potſdam, this morning informed me will be the fineſt he has ever ſeen, though he has lived ſix years in Italy.

I ſend your majeſty ſome verſes, which it is ſaid were affixed, during night, to the gate of the palace of Verſailles.

Bateaux plats à vendre,
Soldats à louer,
Generaux à pendre,
Miniſtres à rouer.
O France! Une femelle
Fit toujours ton deſtin;
Ton bonheur vient d'une pucelle,
Et ton malheur d'une catin *.

* *Flat-bottomed boats to ſell, ſoldiers to hire, generals to hang, miniſters to draw and quarter. O France! It is thy fate to be governed by a woman; thou formerly derivedſt happineſs from a maid (of Orleans), for thy preſent misfortunes thou art indebted to a proſtitute.

LETTER XLII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 7, 1759.

SINCE the laſt letter I had the honour to write to your majeſty, I have had another fit of fever; but, as it has not returned for theſe two days, I hope I am rid of it. I am happy to hear your majeſty is recovered; but you muſt guard yourſelf againſt cold. I have no doubt but you will bring the campaign to a happy concluſion. May it reſtore you, in health and content, to your ſubjects!

My poor philoſophy has once more been diſturbed. Well may it be ſaid that we ought carefully to avoid the company of lunatics. Madam Tagliazuchi, of whom I had heard no more ſince the man was arreſted, has juſt written a letter to me, which I ſend to your majeſty. Her impertinence is ſo great that, however much of the ſtoic I might be, I could not but feel it in ſome meaſure. I know not what the ſilly woman means to tell me, and am ignorant of all the tales and tricks of which ſhe talks. Well might I inform your majeſty, in the firſt letter I wrote concerning that woman, that her brain appeared to me to be diſordered. I perfectly perceive what puts her out of temper.

I aſked

I aſked her, as I likewiſe aſked M. Kircheiſen, "why ſhe had delayed to inform againſt the "man till the court of Vienna had required to "know her name, and to be ſerved gratis dur-"ing three months." This I believe to be the horrible language which ſhe never can pardon. I ſhall be obliged to your majeſty if you will be pleaſed to order M. Kercheiſen to bid this Megara forget me, and ſuffer me to live at peace. Why did the mad woman think proper to addreſs herſelf to me, who, during eighteen years that I have had the honour to be in your majeſty's ſervice, have never been involved in ſuch affairs? Your majeſty will tell me that I ought to deſpiſe the diſcourſe of ſuch a woman: this I allow, but it is nevertheleſs diſagreeable. that I ſhould be obliged, from ſtreet intelligence, in which I have no concern, to ſuffer the moſt atrocious and groſs abuſe. The devout bring all their griefs to the foot of the croſs, and I depoſe mine in the boſom of philoſophy; ſo that, though this woman ſhould daily regale me by a ſimilar epiſtle, I will no more trouble your majeſty with ſuch abſurdities.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

From the King.

Undated.

I HAVE cauſed myſelf to be dragged hither, my dear marquis; to-morrow I ſhall join the army, and I flatter myſelf that Daun and his Auſtrians will not diſcover that I have the gout. In a week I hope Saxony will be entirely ſwept of enemies, and that all will be tranquillity. Should you be well at that time, and can find any carriage hermetically ſealed, you will give me pleaſure by joining me at Dreſden, where I ſhall fix my quarters, and will take care to provide you apartments.

I have ſo much to do, at preſent, that it is impoſſible for me to interfere in the clamours of your mad woman; wait till the campaign ſhall be cloſed, and we will then ſhut her up in whatever lunatic hoſpital you pleaſe.

Adieu, dear marquis, I embrace you.

LET-

LETTER XLIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 17, 1759.

I HAVE read your Reflections on Charles XII. with infinite pleaſure; they are perfectly well written, the ſtyle is clear and ſententious, and it has all the good qualities of that of Tacitus without its obſcurity.

With reſpect to the thoughts, I ſhall ſatisfy myſelf with obſerving to your majeſty that they brought conviction to my mind by their juſtneſs; that I diſcovered great generals alone are able to write on other great generals; and that all the productions of mere authors, relative to ſuch uncommon men, however good the authors may be, will never be any thing but elegant phraſeology. Good heaven! How wretched did the Hiſtory of Charles XII. * appear to me while reading your Reflections! Each man ſhould labour at his vocation. Nothing ſeems to me ſo

* By Voltaire. The marquis was writing to a monarch, and his ſtyle reſembled that of moſt kingly correſpondents. The Reflections of Frederic on Charles XII. are excellent; but to decry the work of Voltaire, ſo unjuſtly, was groſs and contemptible flattery T.

ridiculous as for a monk, ſhut up in his cell, to write a hiſtory of the campaigns of marſhals de Luxembourg and de Turenne. Yet how many ſuch military hiſtories have we, which are the compoſitions of jeſuits, benedictines, and fathers of the oratory! I ſhall not fail, ſire, to print your work with all poſſible attention; and be aſſured there ſhall be no errors of the preſs. I have a wiſh to take off fifty copies, to ſeal up thirty in a packet, and to leave them at the caſtle, in the printing office, where you will find them on the return of peace. The work is admirable, and you will hereafter be glad to give ſome copies to your generals. I wait your orders on the ſubject. The firſt ſheet, however, is in the hands of the compoſitor. I mean to print the work in quarto, that it may agree in ſize with your other hiſtorical works, and with your Poem on the Art of War.

Doubt not for a moment, ſire, but that I will depart for Saxony as ſoon as you ſhall command me; if I am ill, the journey will cure me; and the pleaſure of ſeeing you again, after ſo fine and glorious a campaign, will reſtore me to health.

I have a favour to requeſt of your majeſty, which is that I may bring the marchioneſs d'Argens with me. I have three years ſucceſſively

ceſſively been attacked by a very ſerious fit of illneſs; this I hope will not happen during the preſent year, becauſe of the regimen to which I ſubject myſelf. But had not your majeſty had the goodneſs to ſuffer my wife to accompany me to Breſlau, committed to the care of my ſervants, I ſhould have gone and paid my reſpects to the Eternal Father; and I requeſt you would be well perſuaded that, without wiſhing to act the courtier, I ſhould be better pleaſed to be with you, at Sans-Souci, than with him in his paradiſe. Oh Sans-Souci! Sans-Souci! Why can I not give my milliary fever to the R——, my diarrhea to the C——, and my indigeſtion to L——*? Could I do ſo, theſe three perſons would think more of phyſic than of war.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XLV.

From the King.

Wilſdurf.

THE pots and ſpoons of the French appear to me very pleaſant reſources to carry on a

* La R——, la C——, and L——; that is, as I conjecture, the Queen of Hungary, the Czarina, and Louis XV. T.

war; but this is a trick to dazzle the eyes of the public. I am perſuaded the produce will be trifling. But as the printed Letters of marſhal de Belleiſle proclaim poverty, they have wiſhed to impoſe on their enemies, and to perſuade them that the wrought ſilver of the kingdom will be ſufficient to make a vigorous campaign the enſuing year. Nothing certainly but this project could induce them to invent the comedy they are acting.

Munſter is taken by the Hanoverians; and it is affirmed the French marched on the 25th for Geiſſen, to proceed to Friedberg, and to repaſs the Rhine.

For our parts, we are here, in face of the enemy, cantoned in villages; and the laſt truſs of ſtraw, and the laſt morſel of bread, muſt determine which of the two ſhall remain in Saxony. As the Auſtrians are extremely confined in their quarters, and can draw nothing out of Bohemia, I flatter myſelf they will be the firſt to depart. We muſt therefore have patience, and wait for the cloſe of this infernal campaign. I have this year practiſed all my philoſophy; nor has there been a day in which I have not been obliged to recur to the apathy of Zeno. This I confeſs is a very painful trade, when it is obliged to be continued. Epicurus is the philoſopher of men,

Zeno

Zeno of the gods; and I am but man. I have for theſe four years been in purgatory; and, ſhould there be another life, the Eternal Father muſt give me credit for all I have ſuffered in the preſent. Every rank, every condition, endure croſſes and misfortunes; I, therefore, muſt bear my burthen, heavy though it be, like others. I ſay to myſelf.—"Theſe things will paſs away; "like as do our pleaſures, our pains, and our "happy moments."

Adieu, dear marquis; my letters muſt appear to you very gloomy; but I ſolemnly declare I cannot write any other. When the mind is diſturbed and chagrined we do not ſee the ſun ſhine. I embrace you, and wiſh to ſee you ſoon.

LETTER XLVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 25, 1759.

THOUGH perſecuted by fortune, your own fortitude and abilities place you above her caprices. The example of the paſt aſſures me of the future; nor can I for a moment doubt but that you have already, in part, repaired the miſfortune

fortune which did not in the leaſt originate with yourſelf. When we have acted according to the moſt determinate rules, we cannot, in any profeſſion whatever, be anſwerable for accidents; and leſs in the trade of war than in any other.

I can well comprehend how much you muſt ſuffer; becauſe, be our courage or genius what they may, we cannot riſe ſuperior to humanity. But great men like you have always overcome, by their conſtancy, what would have overwhelmed common ſouls.

The campaign muſt end: froſt and ſnow will reſtore tranquillity for ſome months; and I hope the ſpring will give peace to Europe, when the French ſhall have done melting down their old ſpoons, which they ſend to the mint to obtain money. Do they mean to make war with their copper pots and pans? And is this the coin with which they will pay their Ruſſian and Swediſh ſubſidies?

Would the Engliſh but have ſent, laſt ſummer, a fleet of fifteen ſhips into the Baltic, we ſhould now have been at peace; and, if they will but ſend ſuch a fleet early in the ſpring, we ſhall ſoon ſee an end to the war. The pretext they make of their trade with Ruſſia is ridiculous, for the Ruſſians would not dare to break with them. Where would the Ruſſians have found

the gold and ſilver with which the Engliſh ſupply their mint? And, ſhould the Ruſſians have been reſtive, not a ſingle ſhip would have arrived at Peterſburg. I have much reſpect for the king of England; but he leaves the moſt common opinions in neglect, if he do not perceive that his electorate will be totally ruined, and that within the ſpace of ſix weeks, ſhould you unfortunately be overpowered by your enemies.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Freyberg, December 16, 1759.

BY the edition you have ſent me, I can perceive you have had the fever, for it is ſo incorrect that I return it to you corrected. Let it be reprinted, and throw the twenty copies into the fire. Theſe people are ſo ſtupid that they have entirely changed my meaning, by the moſt evident blunders. Little Beauſobre might very well have paid greater attention. Had the Huns and Viſigoths known the art of printing, they could not have done worſe.

You

You ſpeak to me of the French and their loſſes, which are ſufficiently manifeſt, but peace does not therefore indubitably follow. My affairs are ſtill in a bad ſituation. Succours are arriving to me at preſent; but the ſnow here is ſo deep, and the quantity which has fallen ſo conſiderable, that it is ſcarcely any longer poſſible to make the troops act againſt the enemy.

My ſituation is, that I am ſurrounded by difficulty, perplexity, and peril, on all ſides. When to this I add the treachery of fortune, of which I have had ſo many proofs during the campaign, I dare not confide in her in any of my undertakings. Neither dare I truſt my own forces. Nothing therefore but chance remains, and my only hope is in a ſucceſſion of ſecondary cauſes.

When you have concluded your impreſſion of the work, have the goodneſs to ſend me three copies. Count Finck will remit them to me, and the couriers will not refuſe the packets he ſhall ſend.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I know not when my adventures will end, nor when I ſhall ſee you again: but I know beyond a doubt that I ſhall love you ever.

LET-

LETTER XLVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOUR edition, my dear marquis, is no better than my campaign; and, to ſpeak without prejudice, they neither of them do much honour to Germany. Let us each of us correct our works, remembering that this is homage paid by us to poſterity.

I have anſwered you before; and, what is ſtill better, I have returned you the printed copy, reviſed and corrected after the original.

I more than ever hope the Auſtrians will ſoon take the road to Bohemia; and that, at length, in a few days we ſhall end the moſt unfortunate and the rudeſt campaign I ever in my life made. My nephew is advancing with a large detachment to my aid, and the enemy is making preparations which denote his approaching retreat.

I will ſay nothing to you of the martyrdom I have ſuffered, during a long month, nor of all the inconveniences with which this dreadful ſituation has been attended. I am ſo weary of complaining of fortune, that this very wearineſs induces me to pardon her.

Endeavour, my dear marquis, to procure me

the Encyclopedie, which I wiſh to buy for this winter. I will not ſay any thing to you concerning what will become of me during the winter, becauſe upon my honour I do not know.

Adieu, dear marquis; may health, peace, and content be yours.

LETTER XLIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, December 24, 1759.

A VERY grave perſonage has made his appearance here, beſide whom Daniel, Jeremiah, Joſiah, and all the major and minor prophets, would be cyphers. The man has for theſe eighteen months been thought mad, becauſe, in the year 1758, he predicted that in the year 1759 you would ſuffer great misfortunes. Within this fortnight, he has viſited all thoſe to whom he had announced his predictions, and has thus very ſeriouſly addreſſed them:

" Gentlemen, you have ſuppoſed me a mad-
" man, becauſe I foretold the truth. The event
" has juſtified all my predictions. Suppoſe me
" a madman once again, if ſo you think pro-
" per, for I aſſure you that the king will very
" ſoon riſe ſuperior to all his foes; and that,

" from

" from this time to the end of the war, he " will be attended with the moſt fortunate ſuc- " ceſs."

As the diſcourſe of this ſingular man has been the converſation of the whole city, I was curious to enquire farther into the affair. M. Gottſkowſki, and other ſenſible perſons, who were acquainted with him, ſay that he really did foretel, in 1758, that, in 1759, the Pruſſians would meet a great reverſe of fortune; and that he had always added, what he has once more now repeated, that, in the year 1760, the Pruſſians would become more fortunate and more glorious than they had ever been.

With reſpect to myſelf, without the gift of prophecy, or the honour of heating my imagination, I am well perſuaded you will repair all thoſe evils which have been occaſioned by errors in which you had no part; and which, humanly ſpeaking, you neither could foreſee nor avoid; for ſecondary cauſes are above all human prudence. You reſemble thoſe able architects who, by the great knowledge which they have in their art, can cloſe and ſtrengthen the apertures which have been made in buildings by unforeſeen tempeſts, or earthquakes.

I have ſent *Les Reflexions, &c.** to the preſs

* Reflections on Charles XII.

again

again; and I flatter myſelf you will be better ſatisfied with the next edition than you are with the preſent.

Permit me however, ſire, to defend your campaign againſt yourſelf; the misfortunes of which can never be imputed to you, becauſe you were not the cauſe of them; and becauſe they have happened independent of the precautions which you had taken. Your glory, ſire, will not receive the leaſt tinge.

I cannot affirm the ſame thing of the edition of the Reflections; not but it is very true that the manuſcript copy led me into many miſtakes. Of this I ſend ſome proofs to your majeſty. The former manuſcript reads, *On diſtingue ceux* *; the new correction reads, *On ne fait attention qu'a ceux* †. Another correction reads, *Un vaſt champ aux remarques* ‡; in the old manuſcript the word *remarques* is effaced. In the corrected copy I find, *Je crains bien que ce beau phénix* §; the former manuſcript reads, *Je crois que ce phĕnix* ||.

I might ſend many other paſſages to your

* Thoſe are diſtinguiſhed.
† Attention is only paid to thoſe.
‡ A vaſt field for obſervation.
§ I much fear leſt this fine phenix.
|| I believe that this phenix.

majeſty

majeſty, but this would be only to weary you. Beſide, I muſt allow there are two or three miſtakes, and, among others, one ſufficiently ſtupid, of which I am guilty; yet I three times corrected it, and theſe curſed printers preſerved it in taking off the laſt proof.

I have given orders for a copy of the Encyclopedie from Holland; for the bookſellers only ſell this book when they receive orders, it being too dear for them to keep it in their ſhops. I find, ſire, it is your intention this winter to traverſe an immenſe ſea of ill-written articles; among which float ſome excellent mathematical diſſertations, by D'Alembert; and ſome metaphyſical balloons, inflated with wind, which, by occaſioning the work to be prohibited, gave it a degree of reputation which it has already loſt, in every country where no ſuch prohibition has been iſſued. The laſt articles which Voltaire has inſerted in the work denote old age, and are not much better than his Candide. Wit is frequent, but judgment and profound thinking are ſcarce; this you will yourſelf perceive, and judge of better than I can.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER L.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, January 8, 1760.

I HAVE the honour to wiſh your majeſty a happy new year, which ſhall reſtore you glorious, ſatisfied, and in perfect health to your ſubjects. I return you infinite thanks for the marks of bounty which you have deigned to beſtow upon me, and entreat you to remain perſuaded I ſhall preſerve the remembrance of them to my laſt hour.

I ſend your majeſty four copies of the new edition of Charles XII; to which I add the copy which your majeſty returned, corrected, of the firſt edition, that you may perceive not a ſingle miſtake has been committed in the ſecond. I entreat you would be perſuaded, that thoſe which were in the firſt did not originate with me. I was ill of a fever, and was obliged to truſt the laſt proofs to the printer; but I have four ſeveral times reviſed the new proofs, nor do I think an Elzévir edition could be more correct.

Your verſes on the prophets are charming; but in vain do you complain of fortune, for I perceive

perceive ſhe is ſtill faithful to you, though ſhe occaſionally pretends to have forſaken you. I own the affair of Maxen is vexatious; but recollect that it happened on the 20th of the month, and that on the 21ſt of the ſame month admiral Howe * deſtroyed the French fleet, the allies took Munſter on the 22d, and the prince your nephew, on the 25th, beat the duke of Wirtemberg.

I have a thouſand and a thouſand things to ſay; but I write in haſte, becauſe I am oppreſſed by a violent cold, which for a fortnight paſt has not left me a moment in peace, and which has brought on a cough that ſometimes makes me ſpit blood, and even in conſiderable quantities. It is ſaid to be the pleaſure and the conſolation of the damned to find companions in their misfortunes. Were I a fiend, I ſhould have much conſolation in my affliction; for the diſeaſe is epidemical in Berlin, and as common as the hooping cough was about two-and-twenty years ago. At that time I was a ſoldier. Why am I at preſent nothing better than a miſerable

* Not Howe, but Hawke; and the action at Maxen, and the battle with Conflans, were both on the 20th. Prince Ferdinand ſent troops under the hereditary prince againſt the duke of Wirtemberg on the 25th, but the attack did not take place till the 28th and the following days. T.

burthen on mankind, when I wiſh to poſſeſs a hundred lives, that I might ſacrifice them all in your majeſty's ſervice?

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, January 15, 1760.

I THANK you for the trouble which you have taken in printing my nonſenſe, for it was more than it deſerved. You are too indulgent to the verſes which I ſent you. How was it poſſible they ſhould be good? My mind is too reſtleſs, too much agitated, too much oppreſſed, for my fancy to produce any thing paſſable. This gloomy varniſh is ſpread over all my writings and all my actions.

Nothing can be more uncertain than peace. It is hoped for, and ſuppoſed poſſible, but that is all. I can do nothing more than continue to wreſtle with adverſity; but I can neither bring fortune back to our ſide nor diminiſh the number of my foes. Theſe things being thus, my ſituation continues the ſame; one more misfortune, and all will be over.

Life

Life becomes truly inſupportable, when it muſt be dragged on amid chagrin and mortal affliction. Ceaſing to be a heavenly benefit, it is an object of horror, reſembling the moſt cruel torments which tyrants inflict upon the wretched. You may ſooner kill me, my dear marquis, than induce me to change this opinion. You ſee objects in a point of view which ſoftens and enfeebles them; but, were you only an hour here, how would the proſpect change!

Adieu! Do not fatigue your mind with uſeleſs cares; and, without foreboding the future, preſerve your tranquillity as perfectly as you can. You are not a king; you have not a kingdom to defend; you have not to negociate, to find expedients for every want, nor to anſwer for every event. For my part, ſinking as I do under the load, it is for me ſingly to ſuffer theſe pains. Leave me therefore, my dear marquis, to ſuffer without partaking them. I embrace you, and aſſure you of my eſteem. *Vale.*

LETTER LII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

YOU will make what uſe you think proper of my work. I am ſo confounded by the misfortune that has happened to general Finck, that I cannot yet recover from my aſtoniſhment. It has deranged all my plans, and cuts me to the very ſoul. Theſe misfortunes which perſecute my old age have followed me from Brandenburg into Saxony; I will ſtruggle with them as long as I am able.

The ſhort hymn which I ſent you, addreſſed to Fortune, was written too haſtily; we muſt not ſing *Te Deum* till we firſt have conquered. I am ſo weary of croſs accidents, and the diſaſters that daily happen, that I a thouſand times wiſh for death, and am more and more tired of inhabiting a worn-out body condemned to ſuffer.

I write to you in the firſt moment of grief; my ſoul is torn by mingled aſtoniſhment, chagrin, and indignation. Let us ſee what will be the end of this execrable campaign, and I will then inform you what is to become of me. We will

will arrange the reſt. Pity my ſituation, but ſay nothing concerning it, for bad news ſpreads faſt enough of itſelf.

Adieu, dear marquis. *Quando avrai fine il mio tormento* * ?

LETTER LII.

From the King.

Undated.

WHEN I wrote to you laſt, I forgot, my dear marquis, to deſire you to ſend a copy of my Charles XII. to my brother Ferdinand, and another to general Seidlitz, who is wounded, and is gone to Berlin to be cured. This ſmall mark of attention will, perhaps, give them pleaſure.

My ſituation is not changed in the leaſt, and I continue as much alarmed for the future as have hitherto been. Send me the lyes of your prophet, and the tales which you happen to hear, for my amuſement. Would to heaven that the

* *When ſhall my torments end* ?——The contents of this Letter ſhew that it was written immediately after the affair of Maxen; it conſequently ſhould have been inſerted more early, but I do not exactly know where. T.

talked-of peace might ſoon afford us more permanent hopes than any we have hitherto had; and that we might ſee our pains and labour ended by a durable and advantageous treaty.

Adieu, dear marquis. I embrace you, and offer up a thouſand prayers for your happineſs.

LETTER LIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, January 24, 1760.

I IMMEDIATELY ſent the copies to prince Ferdinand and to general Seidlitz, according to your commands, nor can I expreſs how ſenſible his royal highneſs was of your majeſty's preſent. His health is much better; and his diſeaſe is only the remains of weak nerves, which will be completely re-eſtabliſhed as ſoon as the weather ſhall be better.

My prophet, at whom you laugh, continues to predict mountains and miracles, for the preſent year. I know not whether he be a falſe prophet, but I am certain he does not want wit. Of this your majeſty may judge by two anſwers which he has made, within a few days; the one to a divine, and the other to a prince. The name

name of the theologian is M. Suſſmilch, a paſtor, and a rigid Lutheran.

"You do not underſtand either the Greek or "the Latin," ſaid he to my prophet; "how "therefore can you judge of what the Greek "Bible contains, from the German tranſlation?" —"Sir," anſwered the Daniel of Berlin, "do "you mean to ſay that the German tranſlation "does not give the ſenſe of the ſcripture? If ſo, "how dare you offer it to Chriſtians as containing the pure word of God? You either muſt "allow that I may underſtand the true ſenſe of "the Bible, by reading a tranſlation which has "been approved by all the ſynods, or you muſt "confeſs that the Lutheran paſtors univerſally "deceive the people, of whom they call themſelves the guides."

I now come to the anſwer given by the prophet to a prince; that is to the margrave of Schwedt, who aſked the man whether it were true that he undertook to propheſy. "I have "been fortunate enough," anſwered he, "to "tell ſome truths."—"Go, go," ſaid the margrave, "you are a madman."—"So my wife," replied the prophet, "who is a very ſilly woman, "every day tells me; but I pay no attention to "what ſhe ſays, becauſe I know the extent of "her underſtanding."

I know

I know not whether Daniel, Jeremiah, Habacuc, and all the prophets collectively, could have made a more artful anſwer. Your majeſty perhaps will tell me that my prophet deſerved the baſtinado; to this I can ſay nothing, except that it is poſſible for a man to merit the baſtinado by giving an ingenious but an impertinent anſwer.

Your majeſty from this will begin to believe I am half converted, and that I ſhall ſoon have faith in the ancient prophets, ſince I have credence in the modern. But I take ſome pleaſure in informing your majeſty that I am ſtill a good and faithful follower of Epicurus; not however that I can refuſe proof poſitive; and the following fact I have from the mouth of a Lutheran miniſter, a man of underſtanding, and a member of our Academy of Sciences.

A month before the battle of Cuſtrin, my prophet went to this miniſter and told him—"Sir, "I come to inform you that, in thirty days, "the king will gain a bloody victory over the "Ruſſians; near fifteen thouſand will be killed, "and their bodies will long remain on the field "of battle, as food to birds of prey."—The very day this man predicted was preciſely the day of battle. I well know that it was chance which verified the predictions of the man, but we muſt

ſtill

ſtill be obliged to own it was a very ſingular chance. Could I but be aſſured that chance would be as favourable to me, I would turn prophet myſelf. This would enrage Voltaire, and he would no more venture to laugh at people who inflame their imaginations.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LV.

From the King.

Undated.

IT ſeems to me that your prophet attempts to act the wit. He certainly muſt be a great genius, who is opening a new career to himſelf; for never, marquis, did Iſaiah, Habacuc, or Jeremiah, among the vanquiſhed and contrite Jews, poſſeſs the mania of endeavouring to paſs for wits.

Misfortune inſpires fear, and fear ſuperſtition; I therefore do not wonder that people who announce futurity, with all aſſurance and effrontery, ſhould find others credulous enough to have faith in their predictions. One fool always finds another more fooliſh for his admirer.

I wiſh we could laugh more at our eaſe at ſuch nonſenſe; but I no longer have any inclination to laugh; I am ſtruck by too many misfortunes, and ſurrounded by too many difficulties, amid which there are but little hopes I ſhould be in a merry mood.

I ſend you an ode, which I have written for my nephew. The thing extraordinary in it is that it is not full of fabulous aſſertions, but that it is too modeſt for the perſon who is the hero of the compoſition.

I have had a ſwelled face, which has put me to great torments. I have been attacked by every ſcourge of heaven; yet I continue to breathe, and to behold the light of day, which I a hundred times have wiſhed were to me eternally extinct. In fine, every man muſt ſubmit to his fate. May yours be a happy deſtiny; and may you not forget the friend who is actually in purgatory, but who loves and will continue ever to love you.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER LVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, February 4, 1760.

I HAVE five times read your Ode to the prince your nephew. The work is truly worthy of you, and of the prince. It is the greateſt eulogium that can be made, and at the ſame time the moſt true. After the moſt rigid examination, I have only yet been able to diſcover a ſingle line which appeared to me to be rather proſaic, and is the following:

Je puis au moins prevoir par mes heureux preſages *.

The line ſeems a little harſh on the ear; and the words *puis*, *prevoir*, and *preſages*, in ſucceſſion, are not ſo harmonious as the remainder of this beautiful ode, by which Rouſſeau would be honoured, and which I once again repeat is truly worthy of the hero by whom it has been written, and the hero to whom it is addreſſed.

You laugh at my prophet, but I have ſomething elſe than prophecy now to inform you of.

One of our academicians, M. Gleditſch, maintains that M. de Maupertuis appeared to

* By happy preſage I may at leaſt foreſee.

him,

him, in the academy hall, beſide the clock, and that he ſaw him for the continuance of almoſt a quarter of an hour. This has excited an aſtoniſhing clamour. Remain incredulous now if you can! With reſpect to myſelf, I have determined to order two maſſes to be ſaid for the repoſe of the preſident's ſoul, in order that, ſhould he think proper to act the part of a goblin, he may leave me to ſleep in peace, and go to Geneva, there like an incubus to ſit upon, ſuck the breath of, and torment, the ſieur Arouet de Voltaire.

I ſtill am perſuaded, notwithſtanding the afflicting accidents of laſt year, that you will be fortunate in your next campaign; and, ſay what you will, you will never be able to convince me of the contrary, eſpecially ſhould it be true, as is here affirmed, that the Engliſh will ſend a fleet into the Baltic. Fortune, I allow, has for ſome time ſeemed to be unfavourable to you; but, without any faith in prophets, or in ghoſts, I cannot but yield to certain pre-ſentiments which tell me you will be ſucceſsful in oppoſing your adverſaries, and that at laſt you will acquire an entire aſcendency over them. Previous to the battles of Roſbach and Liſſa, I wrote the ſame thing. The ſituation of affairs then was very different from what they are at preſent;

preſent; my ſecurity ſeemed to be ſtill more ill placed, but was ſoon juſtified by time.

The prince of Bevern has written a letter to me in favour of a French gentleman who has been recommended to him, and with whoſe family I am well acquainted. Some years ſince I knew the perſon himſelf, when I was in France. An affair of honour obliged him to leave the kingdom, and to retire to Nice. His family having written to me in recommendation of him, he came to viſit me at Menton; ſince which, not being able to return to France, he went, at the beginning of the war, to Canada, where he ſerved with diſtinction. Finding nothing more to do in that country, and not being allowed to remain in France, he has determined to enter ſome foreign ſervice. There are three things for which I can be anſwerable to your majeſty; the firſt is that he has much valour, the ſecond that he poſſeſſes probity, and the third that he is of one of the beſt families, I will not ſay of his province, but of the whole kingdom.

With reſpect to common ſenſe; that is an article for which I will never pledge myſelf in favour of a Frenchman, eſpecially a native of Provence. He underſtands Italian well, and the German tolerably; at leaſt he can explain himſelf ſufficiently to be underſtood in the latter language.

language. He wiſhes he might enter a free battalion. His age is about thirty-two, and his perſon engaging. When he left France, he was a lieutenant in the regiment of Champagne; in Canada he was made a captain, and has often had the honour to ſee men roaſted and eaten by the ſavages. Should your majeſty think proper to give him a lieutenant's commiſſion he will be well ſatisfied; and, as he is not in any want, he will immediately purchaſe all neceſſary equipage for the lieutenant of a free battalion.

I have once more the honour to inform your majeſty that I will be anſwerable for the birth, probity, and bravery of the man I propoſe. I entreat you to do me the favour to write a word in reply, that I may not induce this young man to ſpend his money to no purpoſe.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LVII.

From the King.

Undated.

YES, my dear marquis, I have committed miſtakes, and what is worſe ſhall again commit. All are not wiſe who wiſh ſo to be. We remain during

during life nearly ſuch as we were born. The moſt vexatious thing, under our preſent circumſtances, is that every miſtake becomes a capital fault; and this ſingle idea makes me ſhudder.

Figure to yourſelf the number of our enemies, irritated by my reſiſtance; remember their pernicious and redoubled efforts, and the enraged obſtinacy with which they wiſh to overwhelm me. Behold the deſtiny of the kingdom depending on a hair. Full of ſuch ideas, the fine hopes with which your prophet inſpires you vaniſh like ſmoke, driven by the wind, and diſperſed in an inſtant.

To relieve myſelf from images ſo afflicting and gloomy, which would at length render Democritus himſelf melancholic and hypochondriac, I ſtudy, or write bad poetry. The labour, while it laſts, makes me happy; I forget my preſent ſituation, and procure myſelf what phyſicians call lucid intervals: but, as ſoon as the charm is diſpelled, I again fall into my mournful reveries; and my diſeaſe, which had only been ſuſpended, recovers additional ſtrength.

Let me tell you, your Iroquois has full powers; he may, from this day forward, without the charge of homicide, kill as many Auſtrians as he ſhall pleaſe.

You pay me compliments on my verſes which they certainly do not merit. My mind is not ſufficiently tranquil, nor have I time enough to correct them. They are but ſketches, or rather abortions, which the poetic demon obliges me to bring forth, which you from indulgence make welcome, and which appear to you leſs defective when you recollect the dreadful ſituation in which I am.

Write to me when you have nothing better to do; and do not forget the poor philoſopher who, perhaps, to expiate his incredulity, is condemned to find his purgatory in this world.

Adieu, my dear marquis; peace, health, and content be with you.

LETTER LVIII.

From the Marquis D'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 7, 1760.

MY prophet is far from being ſilent reſpecting futurity; he continues to affirm that we ſhall be as fortunate this year as we were unfortunate the laſt. He offers to be puniſhed as an impoſtor, and to be impriſoned as a madman, ſhould he be deceived in his predictions.

Without

Without the honour of prophecy, I am, for my own part, convinced our affairs will be proſperous. You are diffident of fortune, nor can I blame you for this; ſhe has been but little favourable to you during the laſt campaign. But I am encouraged, becauſe I perceive, when ſhe has ſeemed to have entirely forſaken you, ſhe has ſuddenly furniſhed the means to repair the loſſes ſhe had occaſioned.

We have reaſon to fear for the *public cauſe*, when the fatal events which happen originate in thoſe who are entruſted with the defence of this *public cauſe*; but, in all our paſt misfortunes, I can only find individuals to blame, and not either the army or the ſovereign. The battle of Frankfort with the Ruſſians would never have taken place, had the Pruſſian army, when it entered Poland, been differently conducted. The Pruſſian ſoldiers laid down their arms, and ſurrendered themſelves priſoners at Maxen; but it is not the Pruſſian ſoldiers who make capitulations, but their commanders. The tenth legion would have ſurrendered themſelves priſoners, had the chiefs of that legion, Cæſar being abſent, thought proper to ſurrender.

An article of intelligence is aſſerted at Berlin as indubitable truth, which is that you are to command the grand army againſt the Auſtrians,

prince Henry the army againſt the Ruſſians, and general Fouquet the detached corps. I have not, ſire, the ſecret of heating my imagination, ſo as to read the myſteries of the gods; but, on this ſimple diſpoſition of the forces and armies of your majeſty, I will loſe my head, if you do not riſe ſuperior to all your enemies. Your greateſt difficulties, ſire, during the courſe of the war, have been to repair miſtakes in which you have had no part; and you are going to employ generals who never have been guilty of miſtakes.

All the gazettes affirm that the Engliſh will ſend a fleet into the Baltic. Should they do ſo, this will be one of the beſt things they have executed during the war; and, ſhould they be prevented from acting thus ſenſibly by any narrow, wretched views of trade, they will deſerve to loſe the eſteem they have acquired, by the great actions they have performed during two years.

Your majeſty has too much complaiſance to pay the leaſt attention to the feeble remarks which I have ventured to communicate. The alterations you have made appear to me excellent, and have rendered the Epiſtle peculiarly correct. The verſes which your majeſty has written, during the war, have all the harmony and ſweetneſs of thoſe which the muſes dictate in times of the moſt profound peace.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 16, 1760.

WERE it true that I addreſs you like a courtier, I ſhould have been pleaſed ſo to have done, for I then ſhould have given occaſion to the beautiful, *the very beautiful*, lines which you have done me the honour to ſend me. You will repeat that I ſeek to flatter you; and I ſhall reply that I rather chooſe to be accuſed of flattery than ſuffer my conſcience to reproach me with deceit. I take the liberty to ſpeak what I think to your majeſty, and my tongue is the interpreter of my heart.

You believe you have been guilty of miſtakes; and I, on the contrary, that you have repaired the miſtakes of others. The well-judging part of the public are now on my ſide, and poſterity will hereafter decide whether you or I have reaſon. I am convinced poſterity will admire your majeſty, and will undertake to defend you againſt yourſelf. But this is a ſubject on which we ſhould never end, and which we will one day diſcuſs in peace at Sans-Souci; a day which perhaps will arrive ſooner than you hope. How

many unforeſeen accidents may happen, that may beſtow that peace on Europe which is ſo neceſſary to her, and for which ſhe waits with ſo much impatience!

It is your majeſty's commands that I ſhould write all the nonſenſe I hear.

Your cook Champion will never make you any more ragouts, either too ſalt or too much peppered; the ſurgeons have entirely deprived him of what the firſt man employed for the propagation of the human race, and he expired on the third day. It is reported, through the city, that the ſurgeon who performed the operation, and who is a kind of madman (his name is Coſte) put what he cut away between two plates, and ſent it to a woman named Le Gras, whom Champion kept. This wretched joke has excited the babbling of all the women and all the devout.

I have only to add that your majeſty will ſuffer very little loſs by the death of Champion. Now he is no more I may ſpeak freely, without fear of injuring him to your majeſty. He was a man of very indifferent character, and behaved exceedingly ill during the time that the French and Auſtrian officers were at Berlin. He had taken them to board, and daily held diſcourſe in their preſence for which he merited to be ſent

to

to the wheel-barrow *. His converſation was reported to me, and I gave him notice that I ſhould acquaint the governor with his conduct. He promiſed he would reform, and I believed he had kept his word with me; but I have heard, from thoſe who told me of his death, that he continued his former conduct. You perceive, ſire, that Heaven has puniſhed him with more ſeverity than your judges would have done; for they certainly would not have condemned him to caſtration. Deny Providence hereafter, if you can. Such examples are very ſtriking, and of much greater weight than thoſe on which divines found ſo many bad arguments.

How well, ſire, do you deſcribe thoſe ignorant fanatics in the charming verſes which you have written on the Dictionary of the pretended atheiſts!

I have no doubt but the edition of your majeſty's works has been printed from a copy purloined from thoſe which are at Paris becauſe the Dutch edition is but a copy of that which is publiſhed at Paris. There are ſeveral copies of the Dutch edition at Berlin, and which, as I am informed, only contain ſome odes, ſeveral epiſtles, and the poem on war. All the poems inſerted are very beautiful; and, to ſpeak with-

* To work at the fortifications, a puniſhment common in Pruſſia. T.

out reſerve to your majeſty, I am not vexed at the theft, I only deſpiſe the thief, ſince the book will become the delight of all thinking people; and will ſerve as the elements of good ſenſe to thoſe who wiſh to learn to think.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LX.

From the King.

Undated.

I OWN to you, my dear marquis, I am exceedingly vexed to appear before the public in the character of a poet, for theſe people are all in bad repute; the leaſt unfavourable opinion the world has of them is that they are madmen. With reſpect to the Atheiſts Dictionary, it is highly ridiculous.

I was rather vexed to find that the collegue beſtowed upon us was the knave La Beaumelle. This wretch never thought *; and he is among the number of thoſe who from weakneſs are the diſgrace of philoſophy; like fugitives whoſe

* The book by which La Beaumelle was firſt known was *Mes Penſées*; or, *My Thoughts*. T.

COW-

cowardice induces them to deſert their arms. One of the moſt ſucceſsful tricks, among theologians, is that of confounding libertines with philoſophers. The former, who rather yield to the impetuous ſallies of their temper than to their reaſon, often fall from one kind of exceſs into another, and from infidels become bigots. This is the triumph of divines; and the arguments they derive from the conduct of ſuch men, who have not any conduct, furniſh them with their beſt weapons.

But I have men very different from theologians to face; I muſt have recourſe to the moſt artful induſtry, and the moſt excellent ſtratagem, to make head againſt thoſe political fiends that pitileſsly torment me. Theſe ideas abſorb every other; like as a violent diſeaſe renders us inſenſible to inferior pain. In fine, my dear marquis, I am good for nothing, except to fight, ſince ſuch is my unfortunate deſtiny.

Write to me continually, and be perſuaded of my friendſhip. Farewel.

LETTER LXI.

From the King.

Undated.

I HAVE received my printed follies, ſuch as they have been publiſhed in France. I have diſcovered many paſſages which are not ſuitable to politics; theſe I have altered to the beſt of my power, and ſhall ſend a corrected volume to Neaulme, that he may commit it to the preſs. I beg you will bid the little Beauſobre take care that the edition may be correct, otherwiſe we may have to begin again eternally. You may be certain that it was an act of malice to print the work, an intent to aggravate Ruſſia, and perhaps the king of England, againſt me; for which reaſon it is exceedingly neceſſary the edition of Neaulme ſhould appear, and bring the others into diſcredit.

I am unhappy and old; and this, my dear marquis, is the reaſon why they perſecute me. God knows what events await me during the preſent year. I fear I ſhall reſemble the unfortunate Caſſandra in my prophecies; yet who could augur well from the deſperate ſituation in which we are, and which cannot but become

more

more deſperate? I am ſo much out of temper to-day that it is impoſſible I ſhould write more.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

P. S. I hope to ſend the book in queſtion away to-morrow, and Neaulme muſt be expeditious.

LETTER LXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 28, 1760.

I HAVE received your majeſty's letter at midnight, and ſit down to anſwer it immediately. Two ſheets of the edition are already printed. Finding that Neaulme would never have finiſhed, I ſent word to Voſs, by M. de Beauſobre, that he might begin to print two ſheets, on condition that, if your majeſty did not think proper he ſhould continue, the loſs ſhould be entirely his own. The work will be completed in twelve days. Four preſſes are employed. M. de Beauſobre corrects night and day; for the printers work without ceaſing.

I well perceived the neceſſity there was of haſte; and this occaſioned me immediately to ſend the bookſeller's preface, which I have ordered to be printed. I have ſent away thirty copies of this

preface to M. von Kniphauſen, at London; and the bookſeller Voſs has expedited more than five hundred for that city, and ſixty for Peterſburg, by way of Dantzic. Thus we ſhall, at leaſt for a time, prepoſſeſs the public, and afford leiſure to make a new edition. This edition will be finiſhed in twelve days; nor do I think that the aid of fairies themſelves could make it proceed with greater haſte. It will nevertheleſs be very correct, becauſe it is much more eaſy for the printers to work from printed than from manuſcript copy. Encumbered as your majeſty is by ſo many other affairs, I entreat you would make yourſelf eaſy on this ſubject; and depend on the diligence and zeal of M. de Beauſobre, whoſe deſire to ſerve your majeſty is great.

The formidable Thurot is killed, and his whole ſquadron taken. Should not the French conclude peace at the beginning of this campaign, they muſt certainly be poſſeſſed by ten legions of Auſtrian devils.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXIII.

From the King.

Undated.

THIS is what may be called a letter; here is ſomething here to anſwer, and I return thanks to your rheumatiſm for having procured it me.

You ſee all hopes of peace are vaniſhed, and that our enemies are making the greateſt preparations. In three weeks, I ſhall have two hundred and twenty thouſand men to encounter. I ſcarcely have half the number; ſo that it is eaſy to comprehend that I muſt be neceſſarily ruined on that ſide where I am weakeſt, and where I can afford no oppoſition to the numbers that overwhelm me. I have therefore only one reſource, which is itſelf uncertain. Should this fail, I can but wait for what all circumſtances forebode, and which the plaineſt reaſoning proves.

I am regularly bewildered three or four times each day, and exhauſt my brain in ſearch of expedients that never can be effectual. The French I believe are under the power of witchcraft, and nothing can be done with them. I

can preſage no good from their conduct, which is weak, pitiable, and unworthy of a great monarchy.

The Engliſh fleets will immediately put to ſea. Martinico, Montreal, and perhaps Pondicherry, will be the places which they will attack; and the French will learn how much miſchief is done them by the * * * who govern them. I ſend you a ſhort letter to La Pompadour*, which I wrote laſt year, and which threw her into deſpair.

* * * \

not what misfortunes are now awaiting me, yet do I declaim on pictures and collections. Time which flies, Marquis, disgusts us with our most pleasing trifles; and affairs are in so hazardous a situation that we are no longer allowed to think on them; unless indeed some favourable accident should emit a ray of sunshine, to enlighten the darkness in which we stray.

Have no fears for your service *. A motto taken from Aristotle is affixed to it — "Doubt is the first step toward wisdom." I flatter myself you will not disapprove the maxim. I believe the work will be finished in a fortnight, when it will be immediately sent you.

Adieu, my dear marquis; when time shall come, let masses be said for my soul. I really imagine myself with my eyes open in purgatory.

LETTER LXIV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

I HAVE a little commission to send you. Gottskowsky, as you know, has still some fine

* Of china, I imagine. T.

pictures,

pictures, which he deſigns for me. Let me requeſt you to learn the price, and aſk him whether he have the Corregio which he has promiſed me. It is a mere matter of curioſity. I know not either what will become of me or what will be the fate of the campaign, which I think to be ſo hazardous; yet, madman as I am, I concern myſelf with pictures. Such is man; he has intervals of reaſon and intervals of lunacy; you, who are indulgence itſelf, will have compaſſion on my weakneſs.

What you will write to me will at leaſt afford me amuſement; and, for the moment, fill my mind with ideas of Sans-Souci, and my gallery of pictures. I will own to you that, in reality, ſuch thoughts are more agreeable than thoſe which ſpring from carnage, murder, and all the wretchedneſs which cannot but be foreſeen, and which would make Hercules himſelf tremble. The quarter of an hour of Rabelais will ſoon ſtrike; and we ſhall then only talk of cutting each others throats, and of marching and counter-marching, from one end of Germany to the other, in ſearch, perhaps, of new misfortunes.

I have written a ſhort pamphlet, which is publiſhed at Berlin. It is the relation of the journey of a Chineſe emiſſary. The deſign of the work is a ſide blow at the Pope, who conſecrates

ſecrates the ſwords of my enemies, and who affords a place of refuge to regicide monks. I think it will amuſe you. I am the only man who have dared to raiſe my voice, and to let the cries of inſulted reaſon be heard in oppoſition to the ſcandalous conduct of this pontiff of Baal. The work is neither long nor tireſome, but will make you laugh. The ſole means of giving pain to our enemies, in the preſent age, is to load them with ridicule. You will judge how far I have been ſucceſsful.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Your letters are to me a kind of conſolation, like that adminiſtered to Elijah by the appearance of the ravens, that came to feed him in the deſert; or the cooling ſpring to the ſtag exhauſted with thirſt; or like the apparition of Anchiſes to Eneas, when he firſt perceived him in hell. Do not, therefore, deprive me of my only enjoyment, amid ſo many cauſes of diſpleaſure; and be certain of the friendſhip which I ſhall all my life preſerve for you.

Adieu.

LETTER LXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 9, 1760.

I HAVE the honour to ſend the new edition to your majeſty. I had promiſed you it would be complete on the twelfth, and it was finiſhed on the ninth, of the month. The ſpeed and correctneſs of this edition are wholly due to the zeal of M. de Beauſobre; I have only been the admirer of the care and labour he has exerted with the printers, eſpecially to induce them to work during the Eaſter holidays.

If we had done the buſineſs with Neaulme, the edition would have been begun, but God knows when it would have been completed. Beſide, this edition will be a certain profit of at leaſt twenty-five hundred crowns. And why ſhould not this be rather gained by a citizen of Berlin than by a foreigner? Really, ſire, the people of Berlin are good folks. I have ſeen them, in the moſt diſaſtrous moments, a hundred times more concerned for your majeſty than for their own affairs. Actions render men famous according to the theatre on which they are ſtationed by fortune; and after the battle of Frankfort

fort I met with twenty, nay, perhaps a hundred, citizens ſuperior to all the Romans, whom Livy has immortalized for their fortitude, and zeal in behalf of their country.

I have executed the commiſſion which your majeſty gave me reſpecting the pictures of M. Gottſkowſky. He has within three years made the moſt ſuperb collection of the works of Carlo Maratti, Ciro-Ferri, Titian, &c. He has a picture by Corregio, and an admirable Titian. But all I have mentioned is nothing compared to one of the paintings of Raphael, which he purchaſed at Rome. The ſubject is exceedingly pleaſing. It is Lot and his two daughters making him drunk. The drapery does but half conceal their bodies; and the colouring equals that of Corregio, while the drawing is in the grand ſtyle of Raphael. I own I have never ſeen any thing comparable in beauty; and it appears to me preferable to the holy family of Raphael, which is the principal picture in the collection of the king of France.

You will find, ſire, when you have the good fortune to return, happy and contented, to your city and your people, that I have not beſtowed too high praiſe on this painting. I forgot to inform your majeſty that it is nearly of the ſame ſize with the Leda of Corregio.

With reſpect to the price of the pictures, of this I can give no information to your majeſty; and M. Gottſkowſki ſaid it was neceſſary you ſhould firſt ſee the paintings. In this I think he is right; for the painting which might appear to you cheap, you would think very dear, ſhould it not pleaſe you on inſpection; and another might ſeem to you too highly rated, the price of which, after having ſeen, you might not think extravagant. I have farther judged of his prices from ſeveral pictures, the price of which I aſked, and which did not appear to me to be exorbitant. Having ſeen them yourſelf, you will make ſuch abatements as you think proper. M. Gottſkowſki will carefully keep all the pictures he has collected, and will not ſell one of them, till your majeſty has firſt choſen ſuch as pleaſe you.

I am exceedingly well ſatisfied with the manner in which he ſpoke to me on that ſubject. He is an excellent man, truly attached to your majeſty, and one of our good citizens of Berlin.

Should your majeſty wiſh me ſo to do, I will go to Sans-Souci, for a day, and will ſend you an exact and circumſtantial account of the gallery of pictures, and of the garden.

In deſpite of all your foes, I ſee the time will ſoon come when your pains and troubles will be wholly

wholly at an end. The more I examine the ſtate of the French affairs, the more am I convinced that they will make peace in leſs than two months; and, if your majeſty will permit me, I will bet ſix of my fineſt engravings, againſt ſix others of your majeſty's, that before midſummer the French will have concluded peace. Perhaps your majeſty will ſay, I place no great dependance on my wager, ſince I riſk nothing more than ſix ſheets of paper; to which I have the honour to anſwer that, in my opinion, a good engraving is no joke; and that I ſhould wiſh the French at the devil, eternally, were they to make me loſe my wager; nay that they ſhould become greater lunatics, and more beggarly, than they daily do become; and that they ſhould be worſe beaten than they were at Roſbach and at Minden, ſhould they play me any ſuch trick.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P. S. When the correction of the line in the Epiſtle to Marſhal Keith came to hand, the edition was printed; but I will cancel the page. In the copy which I ſend you, and in thoſe which are almoſt bound, the paſſage ſtands as I had corrected it.

LETTER LXVI.

From the King.

Undated.

I HAVE proofs of your uſual indulgence, marquis, in the judgment you paſs on my Letters; they are good for the moment, and ſimilar to many other temporary works, the duration of which does not extend beyond the day of birth.

With reſpect to the *Poeſies Diverſes*, they muſt be committed to the good pleaſure of the printer. Should ever a peace be concluded, I promiſe you to think more ſeriouſly on the matter.

I have read the Laſt Sickneſs and Death of Father Bertier, which is pleaſantly written; nor are the Jeſuits ill dreſſed; but compare this piece with a certain Letter to Father Tournemine and you will ſee what contradictions in opinion! The one is a panegyric and the other a ſatire on the ſociety. I wiſh great writers had better memories, that they might never forget what they themſelves have previouſly publiſhed. Poets, however, do not pay ſuch ſtrict attention; and the fleeting winds bear away their words, and often their thoughts.

Nego-

Negociations for peace reſemble a fire newly lighted, which ſometimes appears to have gone out, and at others emits reviving flaſhes. We muſt wait and ſee what will be the reſult. Philoſophy and experience have ſubdued my natural vivacity; and have taught me to attend with patience, and, as a Chriſtian would add, with reſignation, for the offspring of futurity.

We have no engravings in the country where I am at preſent; nor can I bet any thing againſt yours except ſilks, and the iron which is here dug out of the mines. This would be a wager worthy of Pharaſmanes, and is all I can do for you. Have the goodneſs to deſire Gottſkowſky to ſend me the catalogue of his pictures, which will afford me ſome amuſement during the fits of inflammatory fever with which we ſhall ſoon be ſeized.

I ſhall ſend you no verſes, at preſent, but ſhall reſerve a whole bundle for the firſt opportunity. The demon of poetry is certainly an outrageous fiend, for he torments me in every poſſible ſituation, and aſſails me let me be where I will. If you happen to be acquainted with any exorciſt, ſend him to me, that he may deliver me from this malignant ſpirit.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I recommend both you and myſelf to the protection of his moſt ſa-

cred majeſty, Chance. May he give you happineſs, tranquillity, and health; and ſo may I find you, ſhould this ſame Chance permit my wandering fates once more to reſtore me to the penates of Sans-Souci!

LETTER LXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, May 4, 1760.

THE letter your majeſty has done me the favour to write, has produced joy the moſt ſenſible in my heart, and I wait that happy moment of which you ſpeak with the utmoſt impatience. I have ever been perſuaded that you would finally deſtroy all the projects of your enemies; and, when affairs have aſſumed the moſt cloudy aſpect, I never once doubted but the ſun would ſoon again break forth, diſſipate the gloom, and reſtore to Pruſſia and Brandenburg that glory and tranquillity which they have ever enjoyed, under your reign, previous to the preſent war, which ill faith firſt excited, and in which folly blindly perſiſts.

For what can we call the lunatic obſtinacy of the French but folly? Although the crazy convulſions

vulſions of St. Paris are again becoming faſhionable, in the metropolis of France, ſtill does not that city contain the greateſt madmen in the kingdom; they muſt be ſought for at Verſailles, and in the councils of the court. How great will be the pleaſure, hereafter, to ſee ſuch extravagant lunatics as much mortified as they deſerve to be! I know not whether it would give me greater ſatisfaction to ſee French folly corrected, or Auſtrian pride abaſhed; for God himſelf could not annihilate them; he cannot change the eſſence of things, and vanity is the very nature of this people; a modeſt Auſtrian is an impoſſibility, as much as is matter without extenſion. Were your majeſty ro read all the ſilly things which the court of Vienna inſerts in various gazettes, be your indignation as great as it would, you could not ſometimes forbear laughing. I freely confeſs I wiſh to know what they will ſay, when that which your majeſty has done me the favour to mention ſhall be publiſhed.

I ſhall give the plates into the poſſeſſion of Voſs. This man muſt regard you as the ancients regarded their Jupiter Hoſpitalis. He was a twofold god; firſt the univerſal deity, and ſecondly a houſehold god. You confer on Voſs the ſame good which, as king, you confer on

on all your ſubjects; and as an author you load his houſe with money. A Pagan bookſeller would have placed you among his penates, and a Catholic bookſeller would revere you as his ſaint. But what can a Lutheran bookſeller do? He has nothing but gratitude to offer you; and with this the heart of Voſs is full. He every where proclaims how much he is indebted to you. You certainly have made him a lord. Within a week he is become one of the moſt wealthy citizens of Berlin. You tell me, ſire, of the caprice of fortune, of which here is a very ſtriking example. You knew not there was ſuch a man as Voſs on earth; nor did you hear of ſuch an accident, till he had firſt been enriched by yourſelf.

I have read your majeſty's verſes with infinite pleaſure. You reſemble Horace in his Amorous Odes, and Virgil in his Bucolics, as far as the middle of the poem; after which my Virgil proceeds to depict all the fury of war, as in the Eneid. The whole poem is exceedingly correct; nor does eaſe of expreſſion diminiſh either the juſtneſs of the thoughts or the preciſion of the ſtyle.

Your majeſty is too good, to think of beſtowing porcelain upon me. Occupied as you are by

by affairs ſo important, how can you have ſo much complaiſance as to recollect things that have ſo little connection with the great objects by which you muſt naturally be affected? But, ſince your majeſty has done me the favour to inform me that you can ſend me ſome without the leaſt inconvenience to yourſelf, I will take the liberty to ſay that I purchaſed coffee cups, tea ſets, &c. at the ſale of Schimmelmann in Hamburg; ſhould your majeſty, therefore, think proper to ſend me ſome plates and diſhes, I ſhall carefully preſerve them; and my happineſs will be complete, if, when peace ſhall be made, I may be allowed, in a houſe which I ſhall furniſh tolerably well, to uſe them by giving your majeſty a philoſophic repaſt. Should you deign to grant me this favour, I then ſhall exclaim, like the high prieſt Simeon, "Lord, now letteſt "thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine "eyes have beheld thy ſalvation."

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, May 18, 1760.

YOUR majeſty would ſooner make me believe in the real preſence, tranſubſtantiation, and all apoſtolic and catholic myſteries, than perſuade me we have ſo much to fear as you ſay. Far from being alarmed for * * *, I am now gilding all my picture frames, and purchaſing glaſſes and marble tables; and that not, certainly, with the ſuppoſition of bearing ſuch furniture to Delos, or to Naxus, but to embelliſh my apartments at Potſdam.

I proteſt, with the moſt ſcrupulous truth, that my ſole fear is the riſk which you perſonally run, from the dangers to which you expoſe yourſelf; and this, indeed, ſometimes occaſions me to think of Greece. In other reſpects, I am not in the leaſt diſturbed concerning the war, being well convinced it will end happily to you and your ſubjects, ſhould you only be careful of yourſelf, on whom the ſtability of the ſtate is founded.

Your majeſty aſſures me the French will not make peace; and I conſent to loſe every thing I poſſeſs in the world if they do not, on the firſt check

check they ſhall meet with, forſake their allies. That they ſhould begin the campaign is no misfortune to us, becauſe they will but ſuffer new and heavy loſſes; and all the conqueſts of the Engliſh are ſo many pledges that they muſt be anſwerable for the loſſes which we may ſuffer.

Your majeſty informs me that in three weeks you will have two hundred and twenty thouſand men to oppoſe, not having yourſelf more than half the number. To this permit me to anſwer, that you here ſpeak like thoſe people who affect to be ſuppoſed leſs wealthy than they really are. Every body affirms you have a hundred and fifty thouſand men in the field, which I can readily believe. I have read in the writings of Turenne and of marſhal Saxe, and, what I think ſtill greater authority, I have heard your majeſty affirm, that an army of fifty thouſand men is ſufficient to make head againſt another of eighty thouſand, a part of which only can at any time be employed on the day of battle; and which would become burthenſome, during the whole campaign, from the difficulty of finding ſubſiſtence.

The gazettes all affirm that prince Ferdinand will have near a hundred and fifteen thouſand men, and that he is ſoon to detach a conſiderable corps to oppoſe the army of the Empire.

If

If this be ſo, as from all the papers it appears to be, you will be rid of an embarraſſment which has hitherto occaſioned you much pain and many cares.

After having reflected on the reſource which you hint at in your letter, I perceive that it cannot relate to Italy, and I have no doubt but that you mean the Turks. It would be moſt admirable ſhould they declare war; but the conduct which they have hitherto obſerved, and the happy opportunities which they have loſt, lead me to fear that they will continue to act with equal folly.

Not but a ſudden revolution may take place, in a country where revolutions are ſo frequent; in which caſe I very well perceive that our ſituation would become moſt fortunate. I do not think, however, ſhould no ſuch event happen, that we are in danger of that reverſe of fortune which your majeſty preſents to my view.

I have committed all the plates to the care of M. Voſs; they were in a cheſt with the others which your majeſty has cauſed to be engraved. I ſend the liſt of theſe plates to your majeſty, which Mrs. Schmidt gave me, as my diſcharge, when ſhe remitted them to me. Your majeſty will ſee what plates are ſtill remaining in the cheſt, and I entreat you will ſend me your orders

that

that I may know to whom they ought to be delivered.

Your majeſty is no doubt informed that the ſecond volume of your works has been printed in France and at Frankfort, which contains the Epiſtles and the Letters to Voltaire. Suſpicion ought not to be encouraged without great prejudice *; but, when I recollect your majeſty gave this volume to no perſon, I think in my own deſpite of Voltaire and D'Arget. If neither of theſe people have ſent the work to the preſs, it muſt have been publiſhed by the devil himſelf, to puniſh you for diſbelieving his exiſtence. I have run through that which has been ſent to M. de Catt, that it might be remitted to you. There are ſeveral errors of the preſs, but the pieces it contains appear to me to be charming. The Letters to Voltaire are admirable, and full of imagination, and new thoughts. I laughed heartily to ſee you promiſe a book in proof of the Chriſtian religion, when Bruhl ſhould write commentaries on the campaigns of marſhal Turenne.

I have many more things to ſay to your majeſty, but it is now two o'clock in the morning.

* *Il ne faut pas former des ſoupçons ſans de grands prejugés.* I quote the author's words to juſtify the tranſlation, becauſe I do not underſtand the reaſon of the aſſertion. He probably means—*without good cauſe.* T.

It is full ſixteen hours ſince I had ſight of my bed, and I am going in ſearch of it, for I roſe at ten o'clock in the morning.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXIX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

THERE is much difference between the art of logic and the art of conjecture. The arguments of mathematicians are rigorous and exact, becauſe they relate to the poſſible or palpable objects of nature; but, when it is required to argue from combining circumſtances, the leaſt ignorance of uncertain and obſcure facts breaks the chain, and we are deceived every moment. This is no defect of a juſt underſtanding, but error ariſing from ideas that wear the face of truth, and becauſe men's opinions change; hence it is impoſſible to imagine all the whims which their fancies may conceive.

It is for this reaſon, my dear marquis, that you are deceived in your judgment concerning the French. They will not make peace till their misfortunes ſhall be incapable of increaſe. In

like manner you deceive yourſelf relative to another nation, becauſe you are no necromancer, and conſequently it is impoſſible for you to repreſent things to yourſelf as they are.

You are equally miſtaken reſpecting my army; nor is your mind guilty of any of the errors which I have recited; but your reaſoning, on other occaſions conſiſtent, reſts on falſe principles. I certainly have ſaid that the general who underſtood his art, having fifty thouſand men, might make head againſt eighty thouſand; but I never ſaid that, with fifty thouſand men, he could make head againſt a hundred and twenty thouſand; for, provided the general who ſhould command the ſuperior army were not an automaton, he would diſtreſs his enemy by detachments, and would ſoon entirely cruſh him.

For me, my dear marquis, condemned by my unfortunate ſtars to philoſophize on future contingencies and on probabilities, I employ my whole attention to examine the principle on which my argument muſt reſt, and to procure all poſſible information on this point. Deprived of ſuch precaution, the edifice I erect, wanting a baſis, would fall like a houſe of cards. I am glad to underſtand that you, philoſopher as you are, from your own ſmall experience, are convinced of the difficulty of finding our road in darkneſs ſo great,

when there is not ſo much as a beacon, nor even an ignis-fatuus, to guide us on our way. For theſe reaſons, politicians and warriors ſhould be cenſured with indulgence. It muſt be allowed that a ſingle article of falſe intelligence, or a motion of the enemy unknown to the general, might lead him to commit numerous errors; and that there are caſes in which his ignorance is invincible. The ſituation of the politician is exactly the ſame; the whim of the monarch, ſome court intrigue, or the death of a creature dearly purchaſed, unhinges his whole ſyſtem; and, in deſpite of all his precaution, he never can prevent fortune from exerciſing her full power.

Forgive me theſe reflections, which may ſerve as my apology, and convince you that I am not at leaſt the immediate cauſe of all the follies I have committed. If you will but draw a faithful picture of my ſituation, you will, at the firſt glance, diſcover the cauſes of the great perplexity in which I am; and will be obliged to allow that human prudence is inſufficient to unravel them all.

You muſt give the bookſeller only thoſe engravings which relate to the *Poeſies Diverſes*, and let Schmidt keep the others.

I congratulate you, my dear marquis, on your fine furniture: they are hard at work on your china,

china, with which I flatter myſelf you will be well ſatisfied. I hope it will be finiſhed in a fortnight; and it ſhall be ſent away immediately, ſhould I ſtill remain here.

Adieu, my dear marquis; ruminate in tranquillity at Berlin, and give thanks to your lucky ſtar, that it does not oblige you to philoſophize on future contingencies, and the caprices of man.

I am your faithful friend. *Vale.*

LETTER LXX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, May 27, 1760.

YOUR letter abounds in underſtanding and wiſdom; but, however conſiſtent your diſcourſe may be, I am not convinced; I ſtill am perſuaded that at length affairs will be much better than you ſuppoſe them to be.

He who at Roſbach ſaw the French humbled, and who vanquiſhed at Liſſa his moſt haughty foe, may well eſcape the ſnares of Daun. Accidents I fear, but other fears I have none.

I have read the Letter of madame de Pompadour to the queen, which is a moſt ingenious, and, at the ſame time, a moſt cutting ſatire. I am not aſtoniſhed that it ſhould throw a proud woman into deſpair; but after this I am not, however, ſurpriſed that, from the influence of La Pompadour, the French ſhould continue the war, notwithſtanding the need they have of peace. This woman, deſtitute of feeling, and deprived of love for her country, would trouble herſelf little though France ſhould loſe the Eaſt Indies and North America, could ſhe but ſucceſsfully avenge herſelf.

Your Chineſe Letters have raiſed an aſtoniſhing clamour; the devout of all religions are united in their exclamations againſt them. Men of wit laugh, and think them charming; but men of wit have very little influence over the multitude, who are governed by fools. The Auſtrians have given extracts from the work in ſeveral gazettes, as if it were a hundred times more dangerous than the works of Spinoſa or Collins. The authors of theſe extracts do not name you; but they take care to make the author, whom they wiſh to injure, known. I have the honour to inform your majeſty that it is indeed ſcarcely poſſible for you to remain concealed whenever you write any work; your ſtyle, and eſpecially

a cer-

a certain original turn, continually betray you, be you as careful as you pleaſe in your diſguiſe.

Thus, for example, you never mentioned the Funeral Oration to me; yet ſcarcely had I read twenty lines before I diſcovered your majeſty. And, had you not informed me that you wrote the Letter from La Pompadour to the queen, do you ſuppoſe I ſhould not have perceived you were the author, when I ſhould have read this and the following paſſage?

"You will not remain the leſs apoſtolic, "madam; for, not to hide any thing from you, "the apoſtles, your predeceſſors, took the ſiſters "with them; and to ſuppoſe that they only "took them to pray together, would be rather "too good-natured."

I know Voltaire does not write againſt the queen, and La Pompadour; and, if Voltaire have not ſaid this, who is the author who poſſeſſes ſufficient imagination, and is, at the ſame time, ſufficiently daring thus to write, if we except the philoſopher of Sans-Souci? The following is the other characteriſtic paſſage I mentioned.

"They go ſtill farther at Rome, where the "common father of the faithful, in his indul- "gence, even authoriſes licentious places; and, "provided they do but pay, he is ſatisfied.

" This kind father takes compaſſion on his " weak children, and turns ſuch peccadillos " into good, by the money which he gains for " the church. The world has ever been the " ſame; pleaſure is neceſſary to it, and freedom " in its pleaſures."

Permit me here, ſire, to make the reflections of an author who ſhould endeavour to diſcover the perſon who had written a work that contained theſe two paſſages. He would firſt ſay to himſelf—" A proteſtant author would not " laugh at the apoſtles; and a catholic author " would not turn the Pope to ridicule; it muſt " therefore be an author without religion. The " work is full of wit and fancy, like thoſe writ- " ten by Voltaire and the philoſopher of Sans- " Souci. That Voltaire has not written it we " know; we have therefore every proof that the " other has: irreligion, wit, imagination, ſtyle, " and bold thoughts, all render the conjecture " evident."

I but repeat theſe things to your majeſty, to ſhew you the neceſſity there is that you ſhould not write, when you have any reaſon to wiſh not to be known. There are but two means which you can employ for this purpoſe. The firſt would be to affect a heavy ſtyle, which remedy would be worſe than the diſeaſe; and the

ſecond

ſecond would be to write in the language of bigotry. But your fancy would betray you in your own deſpite; you muſt therefore reſolve either to write no more, or to be immediately known, to readers who have any diſcernment.

I thank your majeſty for the porcelain, to contain which I have had a good preſs made, with glaſs doors. Let not your majeſty, however, imagine that I give myſelf the airs of a petit maitre, or a great lord; when I ſpeak of glaſs doors, I only mean ſquares of glaſs, that coſt eight gros each. They are very white and ſmooth, and this is all that is neceſſary for a man of letters. A philoſopher ought equally to avoid the pomp of Seneca, and the ruſtic ſimplicity of Crates and Diogenes. Epicurus had a town-houſe and country-houſe, but they were no more than neat and modeſt. Among the good things which nature has granted to mankind, mediocrity appears to me one of the greateſt. By mediocrity I underſtand a little more than enough, which is all that man needs to render him truly happy.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXXI.

From the King.

Meiſſen, June 1, 1760.

YOUR conjectures on the ſtyle of authors, my dear marquis, are better than thoſe you make on politics; not, however, but there are ſtill many things to reply.

1. I think my ſtyle might better be known by certain ſoleciſms, than by the turn of my phraſes.

2. There are many men who think and write with freedom. Why will you not allow Rouſſeau of Geneva to be ſuſpected, and various other authors with whom I am unacquainted, of having written works ſo frivolous as thoſe in queſtion?

3. Might it not be ſuppoſed that I am too much occupied, with important affairs, to waſte my time in writing ſuch nonſenſe?

4. The Chineſe Letters contain nothing more daring than do the Perſian Letters.

5. The Letter of La Pompadour ſhould rather appear to be the production of one of the indolent wits of Paris, than of a German who commands an army.

In

In fine, my dear marquis, were it neceſſary to plead my cauſe before a court, I ſhould ſtill have arguments enough to induce my judges to acquit me. The war is not continued by my Letter of La Pompadour, who is perfectly ignorant that I am the author of it; nor can I be ſuſpected ſo to be at Paris. There are other reaſons too numerous and too ample to recapitulate.

Will you not therefore allow it is impoſſible to divine what ſhall be the effects of occaſional cauſes? Will you not own that the art of conjecture is a moſt ungrateful and deceitful art? Yet this is the trade I am obliged to follow. I would rather be toſſed on the wild ocean, without maſt or compaſs, than be under this neceſſity. Your own ſhort experience in the arrangement of the political ſyſtem of Europe, ought to have convinced you of this. I ten times a day conſign myſelf over to Satan, but I do not therefore make any great progreſs.

I congratulate you, my dear marquis, on your having become a poet. My ſource is dried up for the campaign: it is Lent with me; nor will I indulge myſelf in a diſtich till affairs ſhall become more favourable to us than they are at preſent.

Your porcelain is making, but it cannot leave this

this place in leſs than a fortnight: It will conſiſt of two terrines, and four large diſhes, four ſmall, two long diſhes for roaſt meat, vinegar and oil bottles, four ſaltſellers, and four dozen of plates. It will be really beautiful, and in a new taſte, the deſigns of which I furniſhed. I flatter myſelf you will be ſatisfied with it.

The clouds are collecting for the opening of the campaign, in which the thunder ſtill remains concealed; but beware of the moment when it ſhall burſt.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I wiſh you every thing I want, to render you happy; which are tranquillity, reſt, health, and content. I no longer poſſeſs any thing. My conſtitution is worn. Fortune, health, cheerfulneſs, and youth, forſake me. I am, therefore, good for nothing, but to people the country of Proſerpine. If you have any meſſage to ſend into thoſe lower regions, you have only to give me notice.

Farewel.

LETTER LXXII.

From the King.

Undated.

ALL you can ſay, my dear marquis, will never perſuade me that our ſituation is good. Fortune continues averſe to me. I paſſed the Elbe, and the day before yeſterday endeavoured to attack Laſcy; but he made a very ſeaſonable retreat. Thus do my projects fail, one after the other. The army of the Circles will arrive at Dreſden to-morrow, where it will be left; and Daun will then gain ſo great a ſuperiority over me as to make it impoſſible for me to augur well. Laudohn is beſieging Glatz; and I have only a handful of men in Sileſia, who cannot ſuccour the place. I am waſting away on every ſide.

Politics are as contrary to my intereſts as war: I can ſucceed in none of the things which I undertake, and I prepare to encounter every misfortune fate can teach me to predict. You only ſee objects at a diſtance; you know things only by halves; this produces a degree of ſecurity, in you, which you would not poſſeſs did the evidence of truth ſtrike you. Be very

certain that, without ſome miracle, we are loſt. If we can drag on till the month of September, it will be much. All the art and the abilities of a general are inſufficient. Circumſtanced as I am, ſupernatural events are neceſſary; and you know that theſe are no more. In fine, I am in the moſt dreadful ſituation in which any monarch can be placed. I ſee myſelf inſenſibly decay, like a man in a dropſy, who daily obſerves the progreſs of his diſeaſe, and, perceiving the cold harbingers of death deprive him of his limbs, every moment expects the laſt attack to be made on his heart.

Your porcelain is gone, and ſhould by this be at Berlin. Make uſe of it, if it can give you pleaſure; and do not too much flatter yourſelf with uncertain hopes, which may lead you into very ſtrange errors.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

LETTER LXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

Berlin, June 7, 1760.

I HAVE the honour to ſend your majeſty the firſt ſheet of the beautiful quarto edition of

of the *Poeſies Diverſes*, and you will find this edition will at leaſt equal that which was printed at the palace. It is ſold before it is finiſhed, and almoſt wholly for England. You are informed, no doubt, that a ſtatue in bronze has been erected to you in Dublin; and that it has been placed in the beſt ſtreet in the city, which is at preſent called Pruſſian Street. The papers have for a month continually ſpoken of this ſtatue. I did not mention it before, becauſe I well know how little your arch-philoſophic character is affected by ſuch kinds of apotheoſis. As a king, I forgive your ranking yourſelf ſuperior to glory; but as a hero, at leaſt, it ought to be dear to you. Satisfied, however, with deſerving, you feel great indifference for the honours with which it is attended. You prove the falſehood of the proverb which ſays that, never was poet moderate in his thirſt of fame. You are a good poet, yet you fly praiſe. Your modeſty might well put all men of letters to the bluſh.

I have read with admiration the liſt of the beautiful ſervice of porcelain, which your majeſty has been pleaſed to beſtow on me. I immediately went to viſit my preſs, where I arranged it in my imagination, waiting the day till I might arrange it in reality. Permit me to tell your majeſty that the coquette, to whom baubles

baubles newly invented have been promiſed, is not more impatient for their reception than I am to obtain a ſight of this porcelain. The manufacturer's fortnights appear to me as long as the weeks of the prophet Daniel; and, without offence to theſe good workmen, be it ſaid, I ought, according to the firſt letter in which your majeſty did me the favour to mention it, to have received it a fortnight ſince; yet, from your laſt, I find I have another fortnight to wait. Your majeſty ſays I am become a poet; were I ſo, I would write an Horatian ode to return you thanks, and a Juvenalian ſatire againſt the tardy maker.

All people of taſte, and all who are acquainted with the arts, go from Berlin to Potſdam, to viſit the gallery of pictures, with as much eagerneſs as the devout travel to Loretto, or on pilgrimage to St. James of Compoſtella. Thoſe who have ſeen Italy and France unanimouſly allow that, St. Peter's at Rome excepted, there is no building ſo ſumptuous and ſo elegant. I hope to ſee it, in company with your majeſty, at the beginning of autumn; or, ſhould we not have peace, that you will make a fortunate campaign, which will, this winter, reſtore you to your people, and to all your good and faithful ſervants, to whom your life is as precious as their own.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, June 17, 1760.

I AM very ſenſible of the pains and perplexities which your majeſty muſt at preſent endure; yet will you find, in your fortitude and genius, expedients to ſurmount them glorioufly: I perceive a certain hope which has ſeized on every heart, and which is to me a ſure pledge of the accompliſhment of that I have always entertained, and which, in ſpite of misfortune, has never yet been deceived. I have had an opportunity of reading ſeveral letters written by the officers of your majeſty's army, which ſpeak the good will of all the troops, and deſcribe them as being ardent in their zeal for their country and their ſovereign.

Theſe letters have appeared to me the moſt excellent of omens, for the ſucceſs of the campaign, becauſe they truly diſplay the feelings of the officer and the ſoldier; they being written by perſons who had no reaſon to diſguiſe their ſentiments, to the correſpondents to whom they are addreſſed.

I allow, Sire, your enemies are greatly ſuperior

rior in numbers; but your own military talents, and the valour of your troops, will ſupply the deficiency. What you call a miracle, I call a fortunate event, effected by your prudence and your courage, which will ſoon or late happen in the courſe of this campaign, provided you do but take care of your own perſon. Reflect how neceſſary you are to the proſperity of affairs, which cannot but finally aſſume a ſmiling face.

I cannot recover from my aſtoniſhment, at perceiving the numerous Engliſh fleets tranquilly at anchor, in the Thames. The month of July will ſoon begin, and they ſtill continue inactive. I ſuppoſe there are negotiations between England and France; but the beſt manner to haſten their concluſion will be to ſend a hundred ſhips of the line, againſt a nation which does not poſſeſs fifteen, and which has every thing to fear for the remainder of her colonies. The French appear to me like certain half infidels, who will not confeſs during the progreſs of their diſeaſe, but who ſend for twenty prieſts, when the phyſician informs them they cannot recover. The Engliſh fleet in action would be the phyſician announcing death, and the prieſts called in the concluſion of the peace.

Well may your majeſty ſay my experience in the affairs of Europe is ſmall. Yet where is,

I will not ſay the man, but the demi-god, who, perceiving the friendſhip and apparent intimacy between Spain and England, the pretenſions to and claims of Spain on ſeveral of the ſtates of Italy, would not renounce all political conjecture, when he ſhould ſee this ſame Spain tranſport, from Naples and Sicily to Barcelona, all the artillery, cannon balls, and warlike ammunition that are there to be found? You, ſire, know the ſecret reaſons of all theſe proceedings; but, though you have this advantage over other men, you have the mortification to ſee numerous ſteps, manœuvres, and negotiations, in which good ſenſe has as little part as in works of divinity.

I once more thank your majeſty for my porcelain: may Heaven grant I may ſoon, for once, employ it, before I ſee you, to celebrate the firſt battle you ſhall gain! After which it ſhall be ſhut up, till I ſhall tranſport it to Potſdam; where I ſhall behold you, in peace, fortunate, and crowned with glory.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, June 22, 1760.

I HAVE juſt received the beautiful and magnificent ſervice of china which your majeſty has done me the honour to ſend me. The deſign of it is charming, the painting excellent, and the ſymbols of ſcepticiſm invented with taſte. When I contemplated ſo many beautiful things, I freely own to your majeſty it was at firſt with great pleaſure; but this emotion was ſoon ſucceeded by confuſion, when I reflected how little I merited ſo noble a preſent from your majeſty. The greater the favours are, with which, Sire, you honour me, the more do I feel I owe them entirely to your bounty. You act like the Creator, who, from the vileſt clay, is ſometimes pleaſed to form a veſſel which he renders precious. How glorious is it to me that you ſhould deign to ſhow kindneſs toward me, which, as long as I live, will gain me the eſteem of all thinking people; and which, to poſterity, aſcertains an immortality to which I had not vanity enough to dare to pretend, by any of my feeble works!

The

The favour which your majeſty has juſt granted a philoſopher, of talents no greater than mine, will, in the eyes of the public, be a reparation of the injury which folly and fanaticiſm have lately, in France, done to thoſe great men by whom it is cultivated.

A comedy has been publicly played at the theatre, intitled *Les Philoſophes* *. In vain have the worthy exclaimed againſt this intolerable abuſe; miniſters, biſhops, and ſeveral magiſtrates, have ſupported the enemies of reaſon, and the comedy of The Philoſophers has been acted ſix-and-twenty times ſucceſſively; in one of the ſcenes of which Jean Jacques Rouſſeau is made to enter like a beaſt, on all fours, and comes to maintain his opinion on the equality of mankind.

Twenty thouſand copies of this piece have been ſold at Paris, in eight days; on which a partiſan of philoſophy has written a very ingenious but too violent criticiſm. It appears to be rather the effort of anger than of moderation, which is the true characteriſtic of philoſophy. I ſend it to your majeſty, becauſe it may afford you a moment's amuſement.

I have the honour to be, &c.

* The Philoſophers.

LETTER LXXVI.

From the King.

Groſs Dobritz, June 26, 1760.

I HAVE received your letter of the 22d, my dear marquis, at a time when I again feel, as I had foreſeen, the malignant effects of my enraged ill-fortune. You no doubt have heard of what has happened to me in Sileſia, and muſt be obliged to confeſs my prophecies are but too well accompliſhed: Heaven grant they may not be entirely ſo.

I gave orders for your porcelain with an intention to pleaſe you, and I am very glad to hear from yourſelf that you are ſo well ſatisfied. Alas! my dear marquis, I am but a poor immortaliſer! I myſelf wiſh to ſee the concluſion of that period, during which I am deſtined to vegetate, in this vale of darkneſs and tribulation. The end of my path is rugged, gloomy, and fatal.

I love philoſophy, becauſe it moderates my paſſions, and becauſe it renders me indifferent reſpecting my own diſſolution, and the annihilation of thought. I wiſh to ſee the comedy that has been written againſt philoſophers. It muſt

muſt be granted there are men who uſurp this title, and who furniſh ſubjects of ridicule; but in general it is the diſgrace of our age to wiſh to degrade ſcience, which is the higheſt honour to the human mind, and the ſchool which has produced ſo many great men. I, like you, think the preface which you have ſent me written with too much bitterneſs. There are certain perſonalities in it which diſpleaſe, and mark a choleric mind, that breathes nothing but vengeance, and is for that reaſon unworthy of a true philoſopher.

To me it ſeems, the author might have been ſatisfied with comparing our age to that of Socrates, the new comedy at Paris to that of Athens, in which Socrates is introduced in a chorus of clouds, and his hemlock to our modern perſecution, &c.; by which irony might have been evident, but not malignity. But men will ever be men. The leaſt reptile, finding itſelf attacked, will dart out its tongue, in ſelf-defence. The preface was written in the firſt emotions of anger, and we ought to wait till our anger be over before we write. Oh! how prudent, moderate, forbearing, and mild, does the ſchool of adverſity render man! The proof is terrible; but, when it has been endured, its utility continues to the end of life.

Adieu, my dear marquis; have ſome indulgence for my affliction, for it is legitimate. I have for theſe two years been continually ſuffering, nor do I ſee any end to my pains. I wiſh you better fortune, more tranquillity, and leſs embarraſſment.

LETTER LXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, July 2, 1760.

WHEN I received the letter which your majeſty did me the honour to write, I had not the leaſt knowledge of the misfortune which has befallen general Fouquet; for that affair has only become public, in Berlin, within three days. From all the letters, however, that arrive from Breſlau, it appears to me that, except the glory of having taken ſome colours, and thirty pieces of artillery, the action is as injurious to the enemy as to us. Four of their deſerters came yeſterday to Berlin, three of whom were Pruſſians that were taken at Maxen, and who enliſted with the Auſtrians, in the hope that they ſhould find ſome opportunity to return into their own country. Theſe men affirm that the

Auſtrians

Auſtrians had more than twenty thouſand men killed, or wounded. I allow we loſt ſix thouſand men, killed or taken; but it is to buy victory dearly, when the loſs of the victor triples that of the vanquiſhed.

Beſide, all the letters from Breſlau affirm that ſoldiers daily arrive, by hundreds, who were ſuppoſed to be dead, or priſoners, and who had only loſt their road.

I well perceive your majeſty will be obliged to make a detachment, which will enfeeble your army; but marſhal Daun has been the firſt to detach. One of the circumſtances which conſole me in this unfortunate affair is, the intrepidity which our troops diſcovered, a ſingle regiment excepted, which is ſaid, at Berlin, to have acted amiſs. All the others performed wonders. Such courage will inſpire fear and terror, even in the victor, when he ſhall mean next to attack. Should the taking of Glatz coſt the Auſtrians as much as that of Landſhut, they will, before the campaign be half ended, have entirely loſt a conſiderable army; and, ſhould they meet with a check, Landſhut and Glatz will be of no ſervice to them, in the execution of the pretended grand plans which they have formed.

Permit me to aſk your majeſty what prince

Ferdinand is doing: he has at preſent a hundred thouſand effective men, all excellent troops, and he remains almoſt inactive; yet, had the French been beaten, he might eaſily have ſent a detachment of fifteen thouſand men into Saxony.

Allow me, ſire, to repeat, that nothing ſeems ſo ſingular as the conduct of the Engliſh. They have eighty ſhips equipped in their ports. We are now in the month of July, and they continue inactive. When do they mean to employ them? In the months of December and January? In the mean time the French, who ſcarcely have ſix or ſeven ſhattered ſhips remaining, beat them in America, and perhaps have already recovered Quebec. This is really dreadful: the Engliſh muſt have loſt the uſe of their underſtanding. The French are leading them by the noſe, and will play them many other tricks, if they do not act with more vigour.

Your majeſty ſaid, in one of your letters, that the objects of the Engliſh fleets this year would be Martinico, Montreal, and Pondicherry; yet the fine weather will ſoon be over, and theſe formidable fleets are drinking ſtrong beer at Portſmouth and at Plymouth. Their enemies in the mean time profit by their delay, and are on the eve of recovering, in a fortnight, what

has coſt England two years of labour and battle.

I have the honour to ſend your majeſty the only copy we have here of the comedy of The Philoſophers. Diderot and Rouſſeau are the moſt ill treated. It is true that the firſt is only a confuſed repeater of words, and the ſecond diſguſts by the ſtrange paradoxes which he adopts, on all occaſions. Your majeſty no doubt recollects having read the philoſophic thoughts of Diderot, where the moſt trivial things are declaimed on with the moſt ridiculous emphaſis. In the work on the equality of mankind, by Rouſſeau, there are, not only ſingular opinions, but, ſome that are dangerous to all governments and ſtates. I pity D'Alembert, being a man of merit, to have connected himſelf with this herd of madmen; but, in literature, as in politics, we cannot always ſelect the friends we wiſh; neceſſity and combining accidents make us determine on the part we take.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXXVIII.

From the King.

Near Dreſden, July 15, 1760.

IN vain, my dear marquis, do you flatter yourſelf, for our affairs take a moſt deteſtable turn. I thought to have repaired them by marching to lay ſiege to Dreſden. I ſhall take this city, but ſhall not by that better my ſituation. Write my epitaph before I am dead; and believe me to be ſufficiently well informed, of my own ſituation, not to judge it deſperate without good reaſon.

The Engliſh fleets are acting ſucceſsfully on all ſides, ſo that they do not merit any reproach. Prince Ferdinand has only ſeventy thouſand men, inſtead of the hundred thouſand you have granted him, which changes the picture. You reaſon from what you read in the gazettes; but theſe gazettes do not relate the truth, and therefore you are deceived. Laudohn has loſt ten thouſand men at the affair of Landſhut; notwithſtanding which the Auſtrians ſtill have ninety-five thouſand men to oppoſe me with, and the Ruſſians have ſixty thouſand. Such is our ſituation; not to mention many other things on which it behoves

behoves me to keep ſilence, at preſent, but of which hereafter I may ſpeak.

The comedy of The Philoſophers is tolerably well written; but there are alluſions which did not ſtrike me, becauſe I knew not to what they referred; as for example, "Young man, take "and read." "The father of the family," &c. Alas! my dear marquis, the time has been when this would have highly amuſed me; but at preſent the gulph in which I am about to fall, headlong, is continually before my eyes.

Adieu! Do not indulge yourſelf in chimerical hopes. Pity me by anticipation. Pray Heaven that the oracles I utter may be falſe! But happen what will let us write our epitaph in time.

LETTER LXXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, July 25, 1760.

NO perſon can be more ſenſible than I am of the perplexing ſituation of your majeſty; and, had I leſs confidence in your knowledge and fortitude, I ſhould fear the arrival of the moſt diſtreſſing events. But, if miracles be neceſſary

ceſſary to extricate you from your difficulties, miracles you will enact. Is it leſs than a miracle to ſee Sileſia, after the check at Landſhut, almoſt void of enemies? Is it not a miracle to ſee you before Dreſden, deſtroying a part of the enemy's magazines, and keeping Daun in a ſtate of ſuſpenſe, amid all his projected operations?

Things appear to aſſume a more ſmiling face. The prince your nephew, the hero whom you tenderly love, ſoon repaired the loſs he ſuſtained; and we behold a corps of the French totally cut off or taken. The Engliſh have juſt gained a deciſive victory in the Eaſt Indies; and there is no doubt but Pondicherry has ſurrendered; the fact is affirmed in all the Dutch gazettes: or, ſhould it not at this moment be taken, it ſoon muſt be, and the news cannot but arrive with the firſt ſhip.

The French were before in a moſt melancholy condition; and, after a loſs ſo irreparable, what muſt they be at preſent? The following is the beginning of the laſt remonſtrances of the parliament, which have been printed in all the public papers.

"Nothing, ſire, can be more manifeſt than "the exhauſted ſtate of the finances, except the "impoſſibility of re-eſtabliſhing them."

Such was the language held in France before the

the taking of Pondicherry. What then will be ſaid at preſent, when half the kingdom, which had placed its funds in the Eaſt India company, is reduced to beggary, by the deſtruction and total overthrow of that ſaid company?

The Engliſh are ſoon to ſend new ſuccours into Germany. They ought at preſent to make the greateſt efforts, if they wiſh for peace, that they may deprive the French of all hope of ſeizing on the electorate of Hanover; and afford you all the aid they can, to prevent you from ſinking under the weight of your enemies.

I have heard that the young Provençal officer, to whom your majeſty had the goodneſs to grant a commiſſion in your army, has fallen at the attack of the ſuburb of Dreſden. I pitied him, becauſe he was a very worthy man; but my conſolation is that he died performing his duty, in the ſervice of your majeſty. I wiſh I were equally young, that I might be of ſome aid to your majeſty, and ten times a day encounter the ſame fate. I die with deſpair at ſeeing myſelf, in theſe ſtormy times, a uſeleſs burthen on the earth, of leſs ſervice, to my maſter, than the leaſt of his peaſants who can drive a forage waggon, or the horſes that drag his cannon. Till now my decay only appeared to be vexatious;

tious; at preſent I think it ſhameful and diſhonourable.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXXX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Groſſenhayn, Auguſt 1, 1760.

THE ſiege of Dreſden is gone off in ſmoke. We are at preſent on the full march for Sileſia; we ſhall undoubtedly come to action on the frontiers, which may happen between the 7th and 10th of this month. Glatz is taken, Neiſs beſieged, and there is no time to loſe. Should we be fortunate, I will ſend you word; ſhould we be the reverſe, I previouſly take leave of you and all the good company.

Poor Foreſta is killed, and has fallen a uſeleſs ſacrifice. In fine, my dear marquis, the ſhop and ſtock are all going to the devil. We ſhall march the day after to-morrow. I foreſee all the horror of the ſituation that awaits me, and have firmly taken my reſolution.

Adieu: I embrace you. Think of me ſometimes, and be perſuaded of my eſteem.

LET-

LETTER LXXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Auguſt 12, 1760.

NEWS from Sileſia informs us that your majeſty is ſafely arrived there, with your army. Your laſt letter threw me into the utmoſt conſternation; becauſe, knowing how much you expoſe yourſelf, I feared leſt ſome accident ſhould happen to you, ſhould there be a battle. And what would become of us all, ſhould we have the misfortune to loſe you?

Since the receipt of the letter with which you have honoured me, prince Henry has driven off the Auſtrians, and has raiſed the ſiege of Breſlau; your nephew, the hereditary prince of Brunſwic, has beaten and entirely diſperſed the French army, commanded by M. du Muy; and you have arrived in Sileſia, in deſpite of all oppoſition from Daun. I hope all will go well for the remainder of the campaign. I am better pleaſed to ſee war carried on in a country where you are ſituated between ſix or ſeven fortreſſes, of your own, than in Saxony, which is an open country, and where the towns make but little reſiſtance. I have a preſentiment, which has never

been falſified, and which tells me ſomething fortunate will happen.

Should prince Ferdinand, who, with the ſuccour he has lately received, is now as ſtrong as the French, but be victorious, it will put you at your eaſe on the ſide of Saxony, and he might then ſend you a conſiderable detachment. In fact, ſire, provided you do but preſerve your perſon, every thing will be recovered in time.

Your majeſty does me the honour to inform me that Glatz is taken; but it is here affirmed that only the city, and not the citadel, is at preſent under the power of the Auſtrians; and it ſhould ſeem, from the articles of Vienna inſerted in all the gazettes, that the citadel has not yet ſurrendered. I wiſh the rumour may be true; but, your majeſty not having made any mention of the citadel, I much fear it is loſt. Yet ſhould it be ſo, all the other fortreſſes are at preſent out of danger. The ſeaſon is advanced, and in ſix weeks it will no longer be time to lay ſiege; eſpecially if, as I am convinced, we do not loſe a battle. Should one be fought, we ſhall be the victors. But, notwithſtanding this perſuaſion, I would give all I poſſeſs in the world that there might be no battle, during the reſt of the campaign.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

Berlin, Auguſt 17, 1760;
One o'clock in the Morning.

SIRE,

THE joy which the news of the victory juſt gained by your majeſty has incited in me is ſo great that I ſit down at midnight, the very moment I heard it, to write to you. Perhaps your majeſty has already received the letter which I had the honour to write to you, three days ago, in which I mentioned my fears concerning the dangers to which you expoſed yourſelf, and that theſe fears induced me to wiſh there might be no battle, though I was well aſſured, ſhould one be fought, you would be the conqueror. My preſentiment is now juſtified; and I am convinced you will prove the truth of all I have ſo often repeated to your majeſty, in my letters, and that you will finally be victorious over every opponent.

But, in the name of all your ſubjects, in the name of all your ſervants, and, what is more, ſire, in the name of that glorious immortality which you have acquired, preſerve your

perſon; in which, not only all the happineſs, but, alſo, the duration and ſtability of the ſtate reſide. Let me entreat your majeſty to excuſe the diſorder of my letter! I am inebriated with joy, and I proteſt to your majeſty my mind is in a ſituation which renders it impoſſible for me to have more connected ideas. Your laſt letter had overwhelmed me with mortal grief; judge what effects the news of your victory muſt have produced in my heart.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXXXIII.

From the King.

Hermanſdorff near Breſlau,
Auguſt 27, 1760.

FORMERLY, my dear marquis, the affair of the 15th would have decided the fate of the campaign; at preſent this action is no more than a ſcratch: we muſt have a grand battle to put all beyond doubt, which according to all appearances muſt ſoon be fought; and ſhould this be favourable to us we may then rejoice.

I nevertheleſs thank you for the ſincere part you take in this advantage. Many ſtratagems and

and much addreſs were neceſſary to bring things to this point. Do not talk to me of dangers; the laſt action only coſt me a coat and a horſe, and this is to purchaſe victory cheaply.

I have not received the letter you mention. We are, with reſpect to correſpondence, blockaded, as it were, by the Ruſſians on the ſide of the Oder, and by the Auſtrians on the other ſide. A ſkirmiſh was neceſſary to give Cocceji a paſſage; I hope he delivered my letter to you. Never in my life was I in a worſe ſituation than I have been this campaign. Nothing leſs than prodigies can make us ſurmount the difficulties which I foreſee. I ſhall certainly do my duty on the occaſion;—but never forget, my dear marquis that I cannot diſpoſe of fate, and that I am obliged to depend too much on caſualties in my plans, not having the means to form others more ſolid. Theſe are Herculean labours, which I am to effect in an age when ſtrength forſakes me, when my infirmities increaſe, and, to own the truth, when hope, the ſole conſolation of the unfortunate, begins alſo to fail.

You are not ſufficiently in the ſecret to form any preciſe idea of all the dangers, which threaten the ſtate: I know and conceal them. I keep my apprehenſions all to myſelf, and com-

municate none but my hopes to the public, and all the good news which I am enabled to relate.

Should the blow I meditate ſucceed, it will then be time to give the rein to joy; but till then let us not flatter ourſelves, leſt ſome unexpected misfortune ſhould diſhearten you too much.

I here lead the life of a Carthuſian warrior. I am obliged to think much on my affairs: the remainder of my time I dedicate to letters, which are my conſolation, as they were that of the conſul orator, who was the father of his country and of eloquence. I know not whether I ſhall ſurvive the war, but, ſhould I outlive it, I am well determined to paſs the remainder of my life in retirement, in the boſom of philoſophy and friendſhip. When we can more freely correſpond you will give me pleaſure by writing oftener.

I know not where we ſhall take up our winter quarters. My houſe at Breſlau was deſtroyed during the bombardment. Our enemies envy us the light of day, and the air we breathe. They muſt however leave us ſome place; and, ſhould it be a place of ſecurity, it will be a banquet to me to ſee you there.

What, my dear marquis, is at preſent become of your peace with France? You ſee your nation is more blind than you imagined it to be.

The

The madmen will loſe Canada, and Pondicherry, to pleaſe the queen of Hungary, and the czarina. Heaven grant prince Ferdinand may pay them well for their zeal! The innocent officer and the poor ſoldier fall the victims of theſe woes, but the illuſtrious guilty eſcape unpuniſhed.

I know an anecdote of the duke de Choiſeul, which I will relate to you when I ſee you. Never did a more mad or inconſiſtent proceeding blaſt the fame of a French miniſter, ſince the monarchy had a miniſter.

I am interrupted by buſineſs; I was in train to write, but I perceive I muſt conclude, that I may neither weary you nor neglect my duty.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

LETTER LXXXIV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Reiſſendorff, September 18, 1760.

I HAVE received your two letters. I have certainly eſcaped a very imminent danger, and had all the good fortune which my ſituation required at Lignitz. In a common war this

battle would have been much; in the preſent it is no more than a ſkirmiſh, and my affairs, in general, are but little the better.

I do not intend to write you any lamentation, nor to alarm you with all my ſubjects of fear and diſquiet, although I can aſſure you they are great. The preſent criſis changes its appearance, but does not come to a deciſion. Nothing haſtens the denouement. I am roaſting by a ſlow fire; I reſemble a body that is mutilated piecemeal, and which is daily deprived of ſome of its members. Heaven help us, for we have great need of aid!

You continually talk to me of my perſon; but you ought to be well convinced that it is not neceſſary I ſhould live, but very neceſſary that I ſhould do my duty, and fight for my country, that I may, if poſſible, ſave it from deſtruction. I have had many trifling advantages, and have great inclination to aſſume *Maximus in minimis et minimus in maximis*, for my motto.

You cannot imagine all the hard fatigues we undergo; this ſurpaſſes every preceding campaign, nor do I ſometimes know to what ſaint to addreſs myſelf. But I weary you, with my troubles and my griefs. My cheerfulneſs and good humour are buried with the dear and reſpectable perſons to whom my heart was united.

united. The close of my life is mournful and gloomy; do not, my dear marquis, forget your old friend.

The posts and all correspondence are interrupted. Various arts are necessary to convey letters, and still much is hazarded. Write to me at all events; for even if the avaricious or the bears * should take your letters, what discoveries will they make? And they always afford me consolation.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

LETTER LXXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, September 25, 1760.

I HOPE your majesty has received three letters which I have had the honour to write, since the last victory which you gained. About a month ago, you wrote me word that the shop and stock were all going to the devil; yet since that time you have paid the drafts of Laudohn at sight, and have satisfied the demands of Beck. Hulsen, your clerk in Saxony, has answered all

* *Les avares, ou les ursomans.*

thoſe of the prince of Deux-Ponts; and if you can but pay one more debt, before the month of November, you will be among the merchants whoſe trade and affairs are in the moſt orderly ſtate.

The phyſical and chemical claſs has loſt its director by the death of M. Eller. The academy in a body, and the curators and directors, immediately proceeded to an election, agreeable to the ordinance of your majeſty, and the ninth article of the regulations of the academy, which ſays—"When any director ſhall die, his place "ſhall be filled, according to the denomination "of all the academicians, by a penſionary mem-"ber of that claſs over which the deceaſed di-"rector preſided."

Agreeable to this ordinance the academy has appointed M. Margraff, who is undoubtedly the moſt able chemiſt in Europe, and a great philoſopher, and whom the academies of Paris and London conſult as an oracle. The academy, ſire, has commanded me, as director of one of the claſſes, to inform your majeſty of its choice, and of its punctuality in following the rules which you preſcribed by the mouth of the late M. de Maupertuis; which rules it will ever obſerve moſt ſtrictly, that it may continue, by its zeal for the honour of the ſciences, and its obedience

to

to your ordinances, to merit the favour of your auguſt patronage.

If I am not miſtaken, ſire, I here ſend you ſome ſublime and noble phraſes; and while, as director, I deliver the orders of the academy, I do not aſſume the ſtyle "of him who was more "erratic than the Jew whoſe ſtyle and maſk I "formerly borrowed*."

Has your majeſty ſeen a ſhort poem by Voltaire, entitled *Le pauvre Diable* †? It is a very pleaſant poem, and full of ſatirical traits againſt various authors, whom he does not love. I will ſend it your majeſty by the firſt courier.

I imagine it is of little importance to politics to know the preſent reſidence of the pretender; I think it my duty, however, here to inſert a paſſage from a letter written to one of our academicians, by birth a Swiſs, whoſe name is Merian, an intimate friend of the late M. de Maupertuis, and a man of circumſpection and much merit. This letter is dated from Bouillon near Sedan.

"We have a perſon here who has made "much noiſe, by his pretenſions, and of whom "poſterity will ſpeak advantageouſly, till the

* The marquis alludes to his own aſſumed character, as author of the Jewiſh Letters. T.

† The poor devil.

"moment

"moment he left France. He lives at this "place like a private perſon. I ſee him often, "but I ſhall not continue long to viſit him, "becauſe his character is inſupportable. It is "ſingular to meet with ſo much caprice, mean-"neſs and pride combined, added to ſo much "ill humour."

I wait, ſire, for news of your majeſty's health with the ſame eagerneſs as the Jews wait for their Meſſiah, and the Janſeniſts for ſaving grace. If you have not time to write a word to me, let me know by meſſage that you are well. This is the only thing which intereſts me, and it ſeems to me that—*the king is in good health*—may ſoon be written. I aſk to know nothing more.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXXXVI.

From the King.

Undated.

THANKS, marquis, for what you have ſent. I have nothing diſagreeable to inform you of to-day; on the contrary, I have cauſe of

conſolation, and a proſpect of hope to communicate to you. Broglio has juſt repaſſed the Maine, and has left only two thouſand men at Caſſel; ſo that this act of moderation once more announces pacific diſpoſitions in France.

The Auſtrians continue to be ſeriouſly alarmed for their poſſeſſions in Italy; the revolt in Hungary continues; the court begins to aſſume peaceful inclinations, and there is every appearance that this cruel and fatal war is drawing to a concluſion. Thus are my hopes ſomewhat revived, and I am inſpired with momentary cheerfulneſs, which is ſo much gained from the enemy.

I am here employing myſelf in loading my memory and unloading my aſs, that I may lighten the literary burthen of which he has the honour to be the bearer. I am on the point of ending the peruſal of De Thou; his book is well written and has given me ſatisfaction.

The remarks of Voltaire ſeem to me to be tolerably juſt, except that they are too ſevere. Say what we will, if the hiſtory of Voltaire be not inſtructive, it is at leaſt pleaſing. It is a charming miniature, painted by Corregio; and certainly none of us would wiſh the work to be ſuppreſſed.

I ſoon

I ſoon hope to ſend you good news of our expedition into Vogtland, an account of which I every moment expect to receive.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Sleep in repoſe. Let nothing trouble your ſecurity for ſome weeks, and we ſhall then ſee what is to be done. I embrace you.

Farewel.

LETTER LXXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, September, 1760.

NO one could be more rejoiced than I was at the receipt of the two laſt letters which your majeſty has done me the favour to write to me. I begin, at length, to conceive real hopes of once more ſeeing you tranquilly enjoying, at Potſdam and Sans-Souci, the ſuperb embelliſhments which you there have executed.

I cannot comprehend for what reaſon the French, when they might have done prince Ferdinand ſo much miſchief, ſhould think proper to retreat, and give him time to recover himſelf, and fortify his army in a good poſt, did they not ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe the approach of peace. The inaction of the Engliſh fleet, likewiſe, appears to me to accord with the retreat of the French. The facility too with which you raiſe your troops will contribute to peace.

Your majeſty has ſaid nothing to me of an exchange *, which it is here affirmed will take place. But how may we rely on newſpapers in which it is aſſerted already to have been begun?

I take the liberty to ſend your majeſty the account of the two gold medals, which muſt have been remitted to you by M. Eichel. M. Sulzer, the chief of the ſubſcribers, who, having advanced the gold, is in need of a reimburſement, that he may be enabled to ſtrike ſilver medals, delivered me this account. There are thirty-one gold ducats in each medal, to which muſt be added twenty-five crowns of the preſent currency for the ſubſcription of the die. I requeſt your majeſty would inform me where the money is to be paid, becauſe it has been advanced from the funds which we have belonging to the ſubſcribers, and the buſineſs cannot proceed without that ſum.

I believe I ſhall be able to ſend you the tragedy of Tancred, by Voltaire, this poſt. The

* Of priſoners, I ſuppoſe. T.

verſification appears to me very feeble, and proſaic; the ſituations romantic, and often contrary to reaſon. There are affecting paſſages, and ſome individual beauties. He has dedicated his piece to La Pompadour, and his epiſtle dedicatory is the work of a real knave. That man daily becomes more contemptible. I cannot have the tragedy before to-morrow: the copy I read was not my own, but I will ſend that which the bookſeller is to bring me by the firſt courier.

I am delighted to find your majeſty is pleaſed with the hiſtory of De Thou; he was a man of great good ſenſe, probity, and knowledge, and ſuch are the principal qualities a hiſtorian ought to poſſeſs.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 19, 1760.

I SHOULD have done myſelf the honour to write to your majeſty the moment you entered Saxony, and that the correſpondence with your army became open, but that I ſuppoſed you would

would be, at firſt, ſo involved in affairs that it would be to little purpoſe to increaſe the important buſineſs you have to attend to, by my letters. I now, ſire, acquit myſelf of my duty, and, in a few words, write all that has paſſed, according to the moſt exact truth, and as an ocular witneſs.

About the end of September, an advocate from Glogau arrived at Berlin named Sack, who had been ſent by general Tottleben, to terminate his buſineſs with the banker Splittgerber. This man having had a private converſation with our governor, the latter appeared to be thunder-ſtruck. For two days he ſeemed to have heard the moſt dreadful news. His fears were at length communicated to all Berlin, and, as the cauſe of them was unknown, it began to be rumoured that your majeſty had been mortally wounded.

This falſe intelligence threw the whole city into the greateſt conſternation; for my part, I was ſeized with a fever and convulſions. I had received a letter from your majeſty, dated the eighteenth; but it was affirmed you had been wounded on the nineteenth: at length, for my happineſs, and that of the whole city, M. Kœppen received one of your letters, dated the twenty-firſt, and the minds of the people were calmed.

On

On the morrow, all the generals aſſembled, and it was known that the terrors of the governor had been excited by the dread of an irruption of the Ruſſians into Brandenburg. Three days after, general Tottleben appeared at our gates, and ſummoned the city. As he had none but irregular troops, defence was reſolved upon, and he played upon us with red-hot balls and bombs, from five o'clock in the evening to three in the morning. Two aſſaults were made, at two different gates, but were both repelled, with loſs to the enemy, by our garriſon battalions.

It is here neceſſary, ſire, that I ſhould do that juſtice which every citizen in Berlin owes to general Seidlitz, and general Knobloch. Theſe two men, who both are wounded, have ſaved your metropolis, and paſſed the night at the battery of the gates that were attacked. Old marſhal Lehwald alſo did every thing of which his great age would admit.

The day after the bombardment, the prince of Wirtemberg came up with his corps; but the men were ſo fatigued that they could not attack the Ruſſians before the morrow. They were driven off as far as Kœpenick, and it was determined to attack them on the next day; but, as it was known that they had been reinforced

forced by the corps of Czernichef, and by that of general Laſcy, retreat was reſolved on, and the city ſuffered to capitulate, which certainly would have been taken and pillaged by the Auſtrians, while our army ſhould have attacked the Ruſſians. Accordingly the corps of the prince of Wirtemberg, and that under general Hulſen, filed off, during night, through the city, on their march for Spandau.

The great quantity of baggage that was to paſs the bridge, and a cannon that broke down on the road, with ſome other impediments, were the cauſe that the ſecond battalion of Wunſch ſuffered much, and that we loſt about a hundred and fifty chaſſeurs. On his arrival at Spandau, the prince found the place wholly unprepared. Captain Zechlin, and ſome other officers, were the perſons who placed the artillery on the ramparts, and acted as gunners.

The prince of Wirtemberg continued his march toward Brandenburg, and left captain Zechlin with a battalion of convaleſcent men at Spandau. The Ruſſians did not dare to attack this place. We imagined we ſhould have had both their company and that of the Auſtrians ſome time longer at Berlin, when they departed with the utmoſt ſpeed, and even with confuſion. While they were in the city, count Reuſs, the

only one of your miniſters who ventured to remain at Berlin, rendered the city many ſervices, by acting in concert with the generals, whenever it was neceſſary ſo to do, without fear of being taken as a hoſtage. He was determined to the laſt to approve himſelf a good citizen. Nor, while ſpeaking to your majeſty of thoſe who diſplayed zeal for your ſervice, ought I to forget the envoy from Holland, M. Verelſt. When I ſhall have the honour to ſee your majeſty, I will inform you of all he did. In the mean time, ſire, I can aſſure you, with the utmoſt truth, that, ſhould he live theſe two hundred years, you, and the kings your ſucceſſors, could never too much teſtify your gratitude. Of this your majeſty will be convinced, when I ſhall be able to ſpeak freely to you.

The Auſtrians ſtopped the letter which your majeſty did me the honour to write, dated Hermannſdorf, Auguſt 27th, the original of which they ſent to Vienna, and gave ſeveral copies of it here. One of theſe I found means to obtain, and ſend to your majeſty; nor does it contain any thing that is not grand, noble, and virtuous. This letter inſpired ſeveral of the Auſtrian generals with a wiſh to be acquainted with me, but I refuſed to ſee any one of them.

I enquired from thoſe who had been in company

pany with theſe gentlemen, what was the diſcourſe they held; and, according to their general Brentano, they think very highly of general Wunſch, and are delighted that he is taken priſoner.

You already, no doubt, are informed, ſire, that they have not committed the leaſt injury at Potſdam, or Sans-Souci. As to Charlottenburg, they there pillaged the tapeſtry and the pictures: but of theſe, by a very ſingular chance, they have left the three which are moſt beautiful; the two ſigns of Watteau *, and the portrait of the woman which Peſne painted at Venice. With reſpect to the antiques, they have merely thrown them down: the hands and arms of ſome of them indeed are broken; but, as they were found near the figures to which they belonged, they may eaſily be repaired. They have done no damage to the teilings or gilding. The houſekeeper having been obliged to eſcape, half dead with fear, in his ſhirt, to Berlin, I immediately ſent, when the Ruſſians retired, one of my ſervants, with the inſpector of the picture gallery, to Charlottenburg. Every thing has been reſtored to order. The houſekeeper returned thither to-day. Thus this pillage has

* Perhaps the two ale-houſes, or drinking booths. T.

excited more noiſe than it has done harm; and, the furniture and pictures excepted, every thing may be reſtored to its proper ſtate.

Before I conclude my letter, I muſt do juſtice to the whole city of Berlin. During the ſiege I heard every claſs, the vulgar, the tradeſman, and the noble, exclaiming—"What will our "dear and good king ſay?"—It is equally indubitable that I did not hear any complaints from a ſingle perſon: the object of the public continually was that of *our dear and good king*. Preſerve yourſelf therefore, ſire, for ſubjects ſo affectionate. While they ſhall have you for a maſter, they will think themſelves happy, in deſpite of every accident of fortune which you cannot command. May an honourable peace put an end to public apprehenſion, and reſtore to the citizens of Berlin their *dear and good king!*

I am, &c.

P. S. Your majeſty no doubt knows the puniſhment which the Ruſſians inflicted on our news-writers: poor Beauſobre, who was the innocent cauſe of it, was in danger of dying of his fright.

LET-

LETTER LXXXIX.

From the King.

Undated.

THE blows which I laſt winter apprehended, have fallen upon me. It was this foreſight, marquis, that dictated the letters which I have ſo often written to you on my unfortunate ſituation. All my philoſophy was neceſſary to enable me to ſupport the misfortunes, the extortions, the outrages, and the whole atrocious ſcenes, which are paſſed. I am in full poſſeſſion of my prophetic faculties, and will inform you what will nearly be the end of our campaign.

We ſhall recover Leipſic, Wittenberg, Torgau, and Meiſſen; but the enemy will keep Dreſden in Saxony, and the mountains in Sileſia; which advantages will, next year, facilitate the means of giving me the finiſhing blow. I will not tell you what I think, nor what I meditate; but you, no doubt, will imagine to yourſelf all that paſſes in my mind, the agitations of my heart, and what my thoughts muſt be.

Your letter has given me pleaſure, could any pleaſure be felt in the miſchief of hurricane, in times of trouble, in the general ſubverſion of all

order, and amid ravage, death, and deſtruction. I perceive you have preſerved a tranquil mind, while ſurrounded by the Urſomans * and Auſtrians, and that your health has been no ſufferer. The letter, a copy of which you ſent me, is really mine, ſome errors of ſtyle excepted, which have apparently happened in tranſcribing.

Thus is the end of my life empoiſoned; thus, dear marquis, does fortune ſport with weak mortals; but, weary of her favours and her caprice, I meditate how to procure myſelf a ſituation under which I ſhall have nothing to fear from men or gods.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Live free from fears, and once more read the ſecond book of the Eneid, in which you will find a tolerable picture of the woes which my country has ſuffered. Write to me, for you have leiſure, and do not forget me.

* Or Bears.

LETTER XC.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 22, 1760.

I HOPE your majeſty has received the long letter I had the honour to write to you two days ſince, in which I took the liberty to inform you of every thing I myſelf had ſeen, during the ſhort irruption which our enemies made to Berlin. Their ill will produced but little effect; and the things they had ſold or ſcattered are daily recovered.

What now employs the city is the impoſſibility that half the inhabitants ſhould pay their part of the contribution. M. Gottſkowſky, who has diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the zeal he diſplayed in behalf of your majeſty's intereſts, and of thoſe of the public, goes to lay a plan before your majeſty, by which many families will eſcape ruin, and which will be no burthen either to you or to the ſtate; I therefore doubt not but it will meet your approbation. Certain it is that, if the contribution muſt be paid, in addition to that which has already been paid to general Haddick, more than ſix or ſeven thouſand people will leave Berlin; for it has been computed that a workman, who earns ſix or ſeven crowns

per month, muſt be obliged to pay more than forty crowns; and even, ſhould means be found to prevent theſe people from leaving Berlin, a part of their effects muſt be ſold to pay the tax.

All this will be avoided by the plan which the principal citizens and magiſtrates have formed, and which a king, who loves his ſubjects, by whom he is adored, cannot but approve. You, ſire, muſt have ſeen what I ſaid in my laſt letter, relative to this; and I can ſolemnly and moſt ſacredly aſſure you that flattery had no part in my diſcourſe: it was the pure and ſimple truth.

All Canada we hear is taken; and the Engliſh may call home forty ſhips of war, and twelve or fifteen thouſand men, from America; for they certainly can have no fears that the French, not having a fleet, ſhould be able to ſend a new army into America. We ſhall ſee what they will do. Your majeſty knows better than I do, whether or no they merit your praiſe. With reſpect to myſelf, to me it ſeems that ten thouſand men of the allies detached into Saxony would have prevented the irruption of the Auſtrians, and have preſerved Saxony, which you will ſoon recover in deſpite of all your enemies.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XCI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

YOU imagine my mind to be much more at eaſe than it is; I am overloaded with buſineſs, and the cloſe of the campaign is not a thing ſo eaſy to effect as you ſuppoſe. My ſucceſs or my loſſes will decide on the contributions of Berlin. Should I be fortunate, Berlin will not pay a ſixpence; ſhould I be the reverſe, as uſual, we will think on what can be done for the eaſe of the people. This is all I am able to ſay.

Whatever colouring you may give to the attempts of my enemies, and the calamities of the country, do not flatter yourſelf that I have not a clear perſpective through thoſe clouds with which you believe you cover misfortunes that are real, and deſtructive. My latter end is empoiſoned by affliction, and my ſetting ſun as fatal as was the morning of my life. Neither the ſucceſs of the Engliſh, nor the advantages of prince Ferdinand, can counterbalance the fearful ſituations in which I have this year been. Next year, all will be to begin again. Do

what

what I will, I foreſee, the number of my enemies conſidered, that, ſhould I reſiſt on one ſide, I muſt fall on the other. I cannot hope for aid, diverſion, peace, or any thing on earth.

You will therefore confeſs that a wiſe man, after having for a certain time wreſtled with misfortune, ought not obſtinately to oppoſe his ill ſtar, and that true courage has a more ſhort and glorious means of ridding itſelf of afflictions. I ſend poor Gottſkowſky back much the ſame as he came; I can determine on nothing within a fortnight. The campaign muſt, in one mode or other, firſt be concluded. This is the time which I have preſcribed to myſelf, and on which depends, as you perceive, a part of that deſtiny which futurity conceals.

Adieu, my dear marquis; do not forget me, but remain a tranquil ſpectator of all which it ſhall pleaſe fate and the brutal rage of our enemies to inflict upon us.

LETTER XCII.

From the King.

October 28, 1760.

CALL my ſentiments what you pleaſe, my dear marquis; but I perceive we ſhall never agree in opinion, and that we reaſon from very different principles. You delight in the life of a Sybarite, and I regard death as a Stoic. I will never ſee the moment which ſhall oblige me to ſign a diſadvantageous peace; no perſuaſion, no eloquence, can induce me to ſign my own diſhonour. Either I will ſuffer myſelf to be buried under the ruins of my country; or, ſhould this conſolation be thought too kind by perſecuting fate, I will put an end to my misfortunes, when I find it impoſſible to ſupport them longer. I have acted, and I continue to act, according to thoſe internal motives, and that point of honour, which direct all my ſteps; my conduct on every occaſion ſhall conform to theſe principles. After having ſacrificed my youth to my father, and my manhood to my country, I think I have a right to diſpoſe of my old age. I have ſaid, and I repeat, never ſhall my hand ſign a diſgraceful peace. I will

finiſh this campaign, undoubtedly, with a determination to dare every thing, and to make the moſt deſperate attempts either to obtain ſucceſs, or find a glorious death.

I have written ſome remarks on the military talents of Charles XII; but have not examined whether he ought or ought not to have killed himſelf. I think, after the taking of Stralſund, he would have done wiſely to have cloſed the ſcene. But, let him have acted or omitted what he may, his example is no rule to me. There are men who are ſubmiſſive to fortune; I was not born ſo to be: and, having lived for others, I wiſh to die for myſelf. Exceedingly indifferent concerning what may be ſaid, I will even pledge myſelf never to hear it. Henry IV. was a younger ſon of a good family, who made his fortune; this was no reaſon that he ſhould hang himſelf. Louis XIV. was a great monarch with great reſources, and relieved himſelf from his difficulties. I do not equal him in power, but honour is more dear to me than it was to him; and, as I have told you, I do not regulate my conduct after that of any man.

We ſay five thouſand years have paſſed ſince the creation of the world, which calculation I believe to be very inadequate to the age of this earth.

earth. Brandenburg ſubſiſted all this time before I was born, and will continue to ſubſiſt when I ſhall be no more. Kingdoms are ſupported by the propagation of mankind, and ſo will be, while pleaſure is annexed to the multiplication of men. The crowd will be governed either by miniſters or by monarchs, which is nearly the ſame thing. A little more wiſdom, or a little more folly, are ſhades ſo feeble as ſcarcely to be perceptible to a whole people. Do not, therefore, my dear marquis, retail upon me theſe common-place maxims of courtiers, nor imagine that the prejudices of ſelf-love and vanity can impoſe upon me, or effect the leaſt poſſible change of opinion. It is no act of weakneſs to put an end to an unfortunate life, but judicious policy, which perſuades us that the moſt fortunate condition for man is that in which no perſon can injure him, or trouble his repoſe.

How many reaſons has a man of fifty to deſpiſe life! The remaining proſpect is infirm and painful age, chagrin, regret, ignominy, and outrage, which are to be endured. If you will but truly enter into my ſituation, you ought not to condemn my projects in the manner you do. I have loſt all my friends, my deareſt relations. I am in every reſpect as unfortunate

as

as man can be. I have nothing to hope; I ſee my enemies treat me with deriſion, and their pride is preparing to tread me under feet. Alas! marquis,

Quand on a tout perdu, quand on n'a plus d'eſpoir,
La vie eſt un opprobre, et la mort un devoir *.

I have nothing to add to this. I inform your curioſity that the day before yeſterday we paſſed the Elbe, and that to-morrow we ſhall march toward Leipſic, where I intend to be on the 31ſt, and where I hope we ſhall have a battle; if we have, you ſhall receive ſuch information as time and chance ſhall bring forth.

Adieu, my dear marquis; do not forget me, but be aſſured of my eſteem.

LETTER XCIII.

From the King.

Torgau, November 5, 1760.

I HAVE this day, the 5th of November, received a letter from you, my dear mar-

* When all is loſt, and hope is no more, life is a diſgrace, and death a duty.

quis, dated on the 25th of September. You perceive our correſpondence is very irregular. Oh God! How many things have happened ſince that time!

We have juſt beaten the Auſtrians. Both armies have loſt a prodigious number of men. The victory will perhaps afford us ſome tranquillity during winter, and nothing more: next year all will be to begin again.

A ball has grazed the top of my breaſt, but the wound is only a contuſion; ſome pain without danger, which does not prevent me from acting as uſual.

I am occupied in making many neceſſary arrangements; in fine, I will end the campaign to the beſt of my abilities, which is all that can be required of me; in other reſpects my manner of thinking is the ſame as it was eight days ago.

Adieu, my dear marquis; do not forget me, but be certain of my friendſhip.

LET-

LETTER XCIV.

From the King.

Meiſſen, November 10, 1760.

YOU ought before this to be informed of every thing that relates to me, from the letter which I ſent from Torgau. By this you will have learned, my dear marquis, that my contuſion was not dangerous; the ball had loſt a part of its force in making its way through a thick peliſſe, and a velvet coat, which I wore; ſo that the ſternum was ſtrong enough to reſiſt its impulſe. This I can aſſure you was to me an affair of ſmall moment, my whole thoughts being bent on death or victory.

I have driven the Auſtrians as far as the gates of Dreſden, where they occupy their camp of laſt year, my whole ſcience being inſufficient to diſlodge them. The city it is ſaid is deſtitute of magazines; ſhould this be true, famine may effect what the ſword cannot. Should however theſe people obſtinately remain in their poſition, I ſhall ſee myſelf obliged to paſs the preſent winter, like the preceding, in cantonments exceſſively confined; and the troops will all be employed

to form a line, that we may keep footing in Saxony.

This it muſt be owned is a very gloomy proſpect, and an ill reward for the immenſe fatigues and labours which the campaign has coſt. My only ſupport amid ſo many contradictions is philoſophy. This is the ſtaff on which I lean, my ſole conſolation in theſe times of trouble and general ſubverſion.

You will perceive, my dear marquis, that I am not inflated by ſucceſs; I relate things as they really are. The world, perhaps, dazzled by the ſplendor of victory, will judge otherwiſe.

De loin on nous envie, ici nous gémiſſons.*

This is what happens oftener than is imagined; of that be aſſured. To be properly eſtimated, things ſhould be cloſely inſpected. Act in what manner I will, the numbers of my enemies overwhelm me: this is the cauſe of my misfortunes, and of every thing afflicting that has befallen me, which it was not poſſible to avoid.

I do not imagine I ſhall ſee you this winter, unleſs Europe ſhould entertain more pacific ſentiments: for this I wiſh, but dare not flatter myſelf it will be ſo. We have ſaved our reputation

* Though envied at a diſtance, here we groan and weep.

by the battle of the 3d; do not, however, ſuppoſe our enemies are ſo weakened as to be obliged to make peace. The affairs of prince Ferdinand are in an ill train; and I fear the French will this winter preſerve thoſe advantages which they have gained over him during the campaign.

In fine, all objects appear as dark as if I were incloſed in a tomb. Have ſome compaſſion on my preſent ſituation; recollect I make uſe of no diſguiſe, except that I do not relate all my apprehenſions, embarraſſments, and griefs.

Adieu, dear marquis. Write to me occaſionally; and do not forget a poor devil who, ten times a day, curſes his fatal exiſtence, and who wiſhes he were in thoſe abodes from which no man returns, to bring intelligence.

LETTER XCV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Uckerſdorff, November 16, 1760.

I PERCEIVE I am made to ſpeak and write when I have leaſt thought of ſo doing. I have not written to Seidlitz ſince the day of the

the battle; and the news of our pretended continuation of ſucceſs has certainly been ſent by ſome perſon whom I know not. We have taken ſome priſoners, but the number only approaches eight thouſand men, and not twelve thouſand; nor ſhall we take Dreſden, but ſhall paſs a diſagreeable and vexatious winter; and every thing muſt again be begun with the beginning year.

Theſe are truths, however diſagreeable; and in theſe you may place more faith than in the popular rumours, which are purpoſely ſpread, either that they may reach the ear and intimidate the enemy, or to revive a ſpark of hope in the people, and inſpire them with courage. The following line, from Semiramis, you may apply to us:

Ailleurs on nous envie, ici nous gémiſſons.*

We are obliged to make ourſelves frontiers, by laying waſte a part of the country, to prevent the enemy from moleſting us in our winter quarters. We ſhall not be able to quit the field before the end of the month. Imagine what muſt be the fatigues and vexations I ſupport; judge what my difficulties muſt be, by

* See the tranſlation in the laſt letter. T.

repreſenting to yourſelf that I am obliged to ſubſiſt and pay my army by induſtry.

Add to this, I have no company; I am deprived of the ſociety of every perſon I love, and am myſelf reduced to paſs my life in dividing my time between fruitleſs labours and innumerable fears. This is no flattering picture; but it paints things as they are, and ſhews how diſagreeable is my ſituation.

How different is it, my dear marquis, to view theſe objects at a diſtance, through a deceitful priſm by which they are embelliſhed; and to examine them cloſely, naked as they are, and ſtripped of their tinſel ornaments! Vanity of vanities! Vanity of victories! With this ſentence of the ſage do I conclude; it comprehends all things, and in itſelf contains reflections which every man ought to make, but which ſeldom are made.

Adieu, dear marquis. Be not ſo credulous in your belief of public reports, but continue your friendſhip to me.

LET-

LETTER XCVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 28, 1760.

HOW could your majeſty imagine that, ſick or well, I ſhould heſitate a moment to repair to Leipſic, there to have the happineſs to ſee you? Were I unable to travel in a coach, I would be carried in a litter; nothing ſhould prevent me from enjoying a pleaſure which I have ſo much deſired to enjoy. I will therefore depart the very moment I ſhall receive your orders; and will remain with you, if you pleaſe, not only ſome weeks, but three months. I ſhall only require your permiſſion to depart, and return to Berlin, at the beginning of March; becauſe that, for theſe five years, I have been ſubject to a chronic diſeaſe, which never fails to viſit me about the middle of March. It is an efferveſcence of the humours, with ſome fits of fever. When I keep myſelf warm, and obſerve a ſevere regimen, I only am indiſpoſed for about three weeks; but, ſhould I not take every neceſſary precaution, the humour would fall upon the inteſtines, and produce very ſerious accidents, ſuch as thoſe which at Breſlau, and the

year afterward at Hamburg, brought me to the brink of the grave.

I know that to a hero, like you, death appears an object of the utmoſt indifference. But you never ſaw the ſpectre except under the form of fame; were you to behold him accompanied by the dyſentery and diarrhea, you would confeſs that the moſt intrepid grenadier would tremble at a death ſo diſagreeable.

You, ſire, are a victorious king, but not a king prophet; and I well perceive you better underſtand the art of gaining battles than that of making predictions. In one of your rapturous fits, you foretold the Auſtrians would keep the poſt of Landſhut; and M. de Catt yeſterday informed me of the good news which has arrived, that your troops had occupied this advantageous poſt. We converſed much concerning your majeſty, whom he loves with all his heart. But where is the man who does not love you?

M. de Catt departs to-day with M. Gottſkowſky, who every day is taking additional trouble to regulate the affairs of Berlin. He is really a man of an excellent heart, and a worthy citizen. Would you had many like him! The greateſt gift fortune can beſtow on a kingdom, is that of a citizen zealous for the good of the public, and of his maſter; and, to the honour of the

the city of Berlin be it ſaid, I have in the moſt critical times ſeen many of its inhabitants whoſe virtues the hiſtorians of old Rome would have recorded to all poſterity, had they lived in their times.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XCVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 23, 1761.

I BEGIN by thanking your majeſty for the favours with which you have deigned to honour me; indeed every letter I write ought to begin thus. What moment of my life is there that is not diſtinguiſhed by ſome act of kindneſs which you have done me? You have rendered it impoſſible for me ever to deſerve your benefactions; I have no means of repaying them but with gratitude, which, ſire, I ſhall eternally preſerve.

I have been to Sans-Souci; the palace is in very good order, as is the garden likewiſe; and with reſpect to the gallery, St. Peter's at Rome excepted, it is paſt diſpute the fineſt in the world. My ſurprize at ſeeing it was extreme,

nor could I ever have believed it would have produced half the effect. It is now entirely finiſhed.

I wait with impatience, ſire, which you know to be conſtitutional in me, for news of the taking of Caſſel, of which I flatter myſelf your majeſty will inform me. I have already made my arrangements for the feaſt which I mean to give to fifty invalids.

I hope your majeſty will not forget the tragedy of Malagrida. I am now reading three volumes compoſed from the different pieces which the king of Portugal has cauſed to be publiſhed, and which make me ſhudder with horror. I am tempted to write two ſermons, in the character of a quaker, to ſhew how happy is that religion which does not admit of prieſts. Theſe wretched times are equally unfortunate, view them on what ſide we will; whether we conſider them as productive of the moſt cruel wars, or examine the political engines that are put in motion, or thoſe played by the court of Rome, worthy of hell itſelf.

From the pieces which the court of Portugal has publiſhed, the Pope appears to be a great fool; and his miniſter, cardinal Torregiani, one of the moſt wicked men in Europe. As you will certainly have ſomething to tranſact with him

him at the concluſion of peace, I hope you will make him ſenſible of the reſpect which a prieſt in red breeches owes to kings. You are equally formed to avenge, as you are to combat and vanquiſh, your fellow monarchs.

Here is a Letter, written, as it ſhould ſeem, by a French officer, againſt the Univerſal Hiſtory of Voltaire: I imagine you will think the cenſures that relate to war tolerably good; the remainder appear to me to be either falſe or feeble.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XCVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

VANITY of vanities! Vanity of politics! This apophthegm of the ſage, which I, unworthy as I am, cite, is very applicable, my dear marquis, to our fine political reaſonings, which we this winter made at Leipſic; ſo true is it that what appears moſt probable has often the leaſt veracity.

The Auſtrians have twice changed their plan

of campaign, ſince I have been here. I do not, I aſſure you, remain with my arms croſſed, but am determined to oppoſe every wound which the enemy wiſhes to inflict. Do not imagine we ſhall this year have peace; in deſpite of the moſt concluſive arguments, in deſpite of ſo many probabilities, peace there will be none. Should fortune not forſake me, I will rid myſelf of my difficulties to the beſt of my power. And muſt I then continue this year to dance on the rope, and vault dangerouſly, whenever it ſhall pleaſe their Apoſtolic, moſt Chriſtian, and moſt Muſcovite Majeſties to ſay, Dance, marquis * ?

You reaſon very well relative to the circumciſed. Oh! How hard is the human heart! It is ſaid I have friends; yes, and excellent friends they are, who very peaceably ſtand ſtill and ſay—"I wiſh you every happineſs."—"But "I am drowning; throw me a rope!"—"No, "you will not be drowned."—"Nay, but I am "abſolutely ſinking!"—"We hope the con-"trary; and, if you ſhould diſappear, be per-"ſuaded we will write you a very fine epitaph."

Such, marquis, is the world, and ſuch are the very fine compliments paid me on all ſides. The happy genius of our monarchy, and almoſt miraculous good fortune, muſt be our allies; add to

* That is, of Brandenburg. T.

theſe

theſe our arms, our legs, vigilance, activity, valour, and perſeverance. With this aid we may find the equilibrium of the tottering ſcales, though Mr. Pitt has not been able to diſcover the centre of gravity. Such recollections occaſion me to conſign myſelf over to Lucifer four times per day; I then return to my Gaſſendi, next to my third book of Lucretius; and thus is a very ſingular combat between ambition and philoſophy maintained in my mind.

I am ſo buſy at preſent with a hundred thouſand regulations, that I ſcarcely remember Sans-Souci: I know not whether I ſhall ever ſee it more. But you, my dear marquis, you and philoſophy are my conſolation, my aſylum, and my glory!

That I may ſend you ſome news, however, that may intereſt you, I muſt inform you that we ſhall remain tranquil on this ſide till the 15th of July; and that, ſhould fortune ſmile on me between this and then, I may ſtrike a blow ſuch as our enemies expect the leaſt. You will ſoon know what it is. Every thing has been well weighed; we have but to ſee whether the execution will correſpond.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

P. S. Pardon, my dear marquis, the bad writing, and the negligence of the ſtyle: when a man

is poſſeſſed by the devil, he neither writes in the elegiac nor the Attic taſte.

LETTER XCIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 28, 1761.

I TAKE the liberty to ſend your majeſty the Letter on Voltaire which I had the honour to mention to you the laſt time I wrote. The copy that had been lent me was aſked for again, nor could I obtain one from the bookſellers before to-day.

We have ill news here concerning the check which the army under prince Ferdinand has met with, but I hope the evil is not half ſo great as it is reported to be; had not Caſſel been taken, this would have been very vexatious.

To counterpoiſe this bad intelligence, we have a relation at Berlin of the advantage gained by general Syburg over the army of the Empire, which conſoles us in ſome meaſure for the misfortune of the allies.

The zeal I have for your majeſty obliges me to ſpeak what I think. While M. de Catt ſhall remain

remain with you, it is certain that you will poſſeſs one of the moſt worthy of men. The moſt profound ſecrecy will be kept relative to your literary occupations; nor will the curioſity of the public, and of numerous individuals, be gratified as it formerly has been. The moſt ſecret pieces which you compoſed, four or five years ago, are now in the poſſeſſion of a hundred people. M. de Catt, ſire, knows not, nor will he ever know, the juſtice I do him: but I have more eſſential reaſons than you perhaps may imagine for giving you this information; and your majeſty may well believe I do not ſpeak thoughtleſsly, or without foundation, on ſuch a ſubject. Never admit a man whom you have not proved into your interior apartments.

I hope your majeſty continues in good health, and that you will this year gain every advantage that fortitude, courage, and prudence can deſerve over your foes. I am ſtill convinced that all will be well; and that, after having reſiſted Europe combined, yours will be the glory to conclude a good and honourable peace.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER C.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 1, 1761.

YOUR edition is proceeding with all ſpeed, and you may be certain of having it about the 12th of this month. It is very fortunate that we poſſeſs a copy of your works, as they were printed at the palace; for that which you have ſent us of the Dutch edition is full of errors, and mutilated words. You have read it haſtily; and it has happened to you as to all authors, who, knowing their works by rote, ſcarcely can perceive errors of the preſs. Whenever we diſcover one, we recur to my copy, and according to that we correct.

I know not, ſire, whether you have been informed that the divines of Amſterdam have deliberated concerning preaching againſt your work, and their intention ſo to do has been announced in all the papers. This rumour, however ridiculous it may be, has induced me to change a ſingle word in the Epiſtle to Marſhal Keith, for it is that againſt which they declaim the loudeſt. The word I allude to is in the following line:

Allez,

*Allez, lâches Chrétiens, que les feux éternels, &c.**

The word *Chrétiens* muſt abſolutely be eraſed, for it would offend all the fooliſh part of Europe, who outnumber the wiſe more than a hundred to one. I was exceedingly perplexed concerning the alteration. I firſt intended to have ſubſtituted *Allez, lâches mortels*; but the word *mortels* rhymes with *eternels*: this would have been a fault, becauſe the hemiſtich ought not to rhyme with the end of the line. The words *bigots* and *dévots* want dignity. At laſt I wrote the line thus:

Allez, mortels craintifs, que les feux éternels, &c. †

I ſhould gladly have waited for your majeſty's correction; but it could not have arrived in time, and the edition muſt have been delayed. Should you not be ſatisfied, you may ſend me a different reading, and the leaf may be cancelled, which will be the work of half an hour; but I entreat your majeſty to eraſe the word *Chrétiens*. You have the probity, the courage, and the wit of Julian: but when he treated the Chriſtians as cowards, three fourths of the empire ſtill remained pagans; whereas,

* Cowardly Chriſtians, let fires eternal, &c.

† Fearful mortals, &c.

at

at preſent, there is not a man from Liſbon to Archangel who does not call himſelf Chriſtian. If I, who have the honour to be the high prieſt of your majeſty's ſect, think this word offenſive, what effect muſt it produce on the mind of a catholic, or a zealous proteſtant?

I now come to your Ode on the Germans. On the faith of an Epicurean, on the faith of a philoſopher, in fine, on the faith of a man who hates falſehood, I never have read any thing which pleaſed me more. You have written a hundred charming things, full of ſtrength and energy; but, in my opinion, you have never written better. I have read your work five times, and have five times thought it admirable. The only defects which I imagined I perceived are in a ſingle ſtrophe, which begins thus:

Ha! ſi le ſang coulait comme au temps de vos pères, &c. *

This is a beautiful line, as are the three which follow; but the ſenſe of the fifth ſeems to me disjointed:

De ces uſurpateurs dont le fer s'eſt ſoumis, &c. †

This line muſt be connected with the firſt;

* Did blood flow now, as in our fathers' times.

† Of thoſe uſurpers whoſe enſlaving ſwords.

and

and the conſtruction of "Did blood flow now," muſt agree with that of the preceding verſe:

De votre liberté, de vos droits, de vos princes,
De ces uſurpateurs dont le fer s'eſt ſoumis, &c. *

The four laſt lines of the ſame ſtrophe appear likewiſe to me to be feeble, and not to conclude the ſenſe of the firſt. Preciſion requires that the word *ſi* (if) ſhould be followed by the word *mais* (but):

Ha! ſi le ſang coulait comme au temps de vos pères, &c.
Mais il n'eſt repandu que pour vos tyrans †.

The uſe of the word *mais* can eaſily be avoided, though it muſt nevertheleſs be underſtood.

There is another objectionable line in the ſame ſtrophe—*Si vos puiſſans armemens* ‡. The words *puiſſans* and *armemens* rhyme, and produce a diſagreeable ſound.

This, ſire, is all which the moſt rigid criticiſm has to allege: the remainder of your Ode is admirable, and ſuperior to cenſure, nay, I almoſt dare ſay, to cavil; all is ſublime, all is clear, all is bold yet correct; nor does the ar-

* Of your liberties, your lives, your kings; of thoſe uſurpers whoſe enſlaving ſwords, &c.

† Did blood flow now, &c. But, ah! it is for tyrants only ſhed.

‡ If your powerful armaments.

dour of the thoughts in the leaſt injure the juſtneſs of the diction.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CI.

From the King.

Undated.

THE verſe in the Epiſtle to Marſhal Keith may be thus corrected, and there will then be only one word altered :

Allez, lâches humains, que les feux éternels.

Here is the ſtrophe to which you object, ſuch as I have corrected it :

Ah ! ſi ce ſang coulait comme au temps de vos pères,
Pour abaiſſer l'orgueil de ces rois ſanguinaires,
De ces uſurpateurs dont le fer s'eſt ſoumis
De vos vaſtes états les plus riches provinces,
Rivaux toujours jaloux, éternels ennemis
De votre liberté, de vos droits, de vos princes ;
Mais vos cruels armemens
Souillent vos bras parricides,
Guidés par les Euménides,
Du meurtre de vos parens *.

This

* Did blood flow now, as in our fathers times,
The pride of ſanguinary kings t' abaſe,

And

This, my dear marquis, is all I could do for your ſervice: the fiend of war has at preſent exorciſed the demon of poetry; and the numerous meaſures I have to take, and the affairs I have to regulate, abſorb almoſt my whole time. I thank you for the care you have beſtowed on the edition which has excited ſuch clamours, which I hope will be ſome little allayed by the new one; if not, I ſhall take comfort, and not indulge in deſpair.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

LETTER CII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 4, 1761.

I WILL not tell your majeſty how much I have been grieved at the news of the raiſing

> And of uſurpers, whoſe enſlaving ſwords
> The richeſt diſtricts of your ſtates have conquered,
> Eternal rivals, and eternal foes
> To freedom, arts, and kings, that once were yours,
> 'Twere ſomething then; but now, like parricides,
> Your bloody falchions, which the furies wield
> In rage, alight on thoſe who gave you life.

of the ſiege of Caſſel; you will from your-ſelf imagine what I have ſuffered; but I have ſeen ſo many diſagreeable events happily repaired, during this war, that I flatter myſelf it will once more be the ſame.

M. Gottſkowſky is returned from the Ruſſians, where he has encountered conſiderable ſufferings and dangers. He ſuppoſed he would have been arreſted as a hoſtage: but this was one of the leaſt of his troubles, for he was ſeveral times in danger of death. He is really a brave and good citizen. He has concluded the affair of the contribution, concerning which I muſt recal to your majeſty's recollection what I wrote to you ſix months ago. Should the contribution be raiſed in the manner of that which was paid to Haddick, more than ten thouſand ſouls will quit Berlin; for they will prefer to go and ſeek their fortune elſewhere, to the act of paying a ſum equivalent to all they can earn in two years.

I fear leſt no man in place ſhould have repreſented this truth to your majeſty; but the zeal I have for your perſon will not permit me to diſſemble. I entreat your pardon for the liberty I take; but it has been occaſioned by my perceiving the preſent ſtate of affairs, and how many people have prepared to quit the country:

try: ſilence therefore would have been guilt. There is a means of paying the contribution without becoming burthenſome either to your majeſty, or to the metropolis; and the project which the merchants, who have advanced great ſums, have formed, appears to me to be a good one, and eaſy of execution. You, ſire, however, will judge a hundred times better than I can of this buſineſs, and will always act for the beſt. May heaven preſerve you for your faithful ſubjects and ſervants, and all will then be well.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 17, 1761.

WE ſhall not fail to inſert the errata, but moſt of the errors had been corrected by cancels; nor will you now find the word *pieds* (feet) inſtead of *genoux* (knees). What can a poor corrector of the preſs do with ſuch wretched printers? He reads three reviſes, renders the ſheet correct, and the compoſitor who is to

alter the laſt proof, lets a line fall, ſcatters the letters, and the corrector is in deſpair.

One of the journeymen printers thought proper, on his own authority, to correct the word *genoux*, and to inſert that of *pieds*; telling his comrades that he underſtood the French, and that he well knew what he was doing. To prevent things like theſe, it is neceſſary permiſſion ſhould be given to puniſh ſuch wretches.

The ſecond edition has been begun, the firſt having been bought up before it was finiſhed, by thoſe who had previouſly purchaſed the copies. More than half of that edition is already printed, in which there are none of the faults that there were in the firſt.

I have been four days in ſearch, ſire, of your Chineſe Letters, but none of the bookſellers have them: they did not know the work. At laſt one of my friends yeſterday brought me a copy, as a new publication; by which it ſeems that it is come into the hands of the bookſellers ſince I ſent to enquire. If your majeſty will but cede theſe ſix Chineſe Letters to me, I will barter ſix volumes of the Jewiſh Letters in return. You have perfectly attained the end at which you aimed, which was to load not only with ridicule, but likewiſe with ſhame, the pope and the court of Rome. There is nothing ſuperfluous

perfluous in your work, nor any thing forgotten which could render it uſeful. Pleaſantry, if I may uſe a phyſical phraſe, is the only vehicle which induces the catholic readers to ſwallow thoſe ſtrong doſes that abound in your work, and which, ſtripped of the ornaments of witty raillery, would have diſpleaſed many of your readers. Your Letter on the Election of Popes is charming; nor is that leſs ſo which is written on the prieſts, that each invokes his god, and eats him as he deſcends. The ceremony of the conſecrated ſword is peculiarly admirable.

Who can have informed your majeſty of all theſe ridiculous ceremonies? Did I not know that baron von Pölnitz is at Magdeburg, I ſhould have ſuppoſed he had revealed all the ſecrets of the holy mother church, into the boſom of which he has for the third time entered.

The only objection I can find to your work is the manner in which it is printed. You complain of the errors in the edition of the *Poeſies Diverſes*; but what would you have ſaid, had you ſeen the Letters of your Mandarin? You cannot have a fatherly affection, if the bowels of your compaſſion would not have been moved, thus to have ſeen your child ſo cruelly lacerated. A new edition is making of

this work at Berlin, which will be much more correct, eſpecially in punctuation.

Notwithſtanding all which your majeſty has done me the favour to write to me, I am ſtill ready to wager that the French will make peace toward the end of June; and thus, ſire, do I found my hopes:

There are two parties in France, the one for peace, the other for war. The firſt unfavourable accident that ſhall happen will occaſion the party for peace to exclaim aloud; the people, the parliaments, the merchants, will all join in chorus: and the party for war will either be entirely overthrown, or at leaſt obliged to yield; eſpecially under a weak government, which has ſuffered the parliament of Thouloufe to publiſh an arret which condemns any one who ſhall dare to levy taxes, that have not been approved by the parliament, to death.

Your majeſty, perhaps, will anſwer my opinion is founded in the hope that the French will receive ſome check; but this hope is to me a certainty: for the accompliſhment of it I refer to prince Ferdinand, to Mr. Pitt, and to the Engliſh fleets. In fine, ſire, the prophecies I make will not be very diſtant in their accompliſhment; and I conſent that your majeſty ſhould tell me I am incapable of oracular fury,

or

or of being numbered among the ſeers, or even the minor prophets, nay among makers of almanacs, if I do not announce the truth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CIV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

I SHOULD rather ſpeak to you of peace than of our preparations for the campaign; but, not to deceive you, I inform you of things as they are. I have too many indications, and have heard too many anecdotes, to doubt that the queen of Hungary is not bent on war. The cartel has again been infringed, in deſpite of the ſolemn engagements that were mutually entered into for its execution. A feature ſo ſtrong as this, and ſo evident a want of faith, ſufficiently prove that the queen of Hungary, determined to tempt the perils of the campaign, thinks it her intereſt to deprive me of my impriſoned troops as long as ſhe can.

Nor do I judge from this alone; there are many other circumſtances which accord, and diſcover the myſtery of iniquity. Let us therefore

fore leave the people in the flattering hopes of a ſpeedy peace; and, though undeceived yourſelf, let them remain in error.

I expect nearly the ſame events which happened to us laſt year, without knowing whether we ſhall have the ſame good fortune. One fatal moment may overthrow the edifice which we have hitherto ſuſtained, well or ill, by labours immenſe. But let theſe things be as it ſhall pleaſe heaven; I enter the campaign like a man who throws himſelf into the ſea head foremoſt. To endeavour to foreſee all the ill that can happen, would be to engender hypochondria; to take no foreſight, would be to be guilty of the error of being caught unprovided. I ſay to myſelf that all the good that is hoped, or ill that is feared, never literally comes to paſs; from each we muſt make large abatements. Let me add my enemies are ſo numerous, that I can only make a war of obſervation, and let the labours of the day ſuffice for the day itſelf. So much for military politics.

I paſs at preſent to the ſubject of your letter, in which you ſpeak of the new tragedy of Voltaire. I have read it once more, and find affecting ſituations in it, which he has employed to advantage; but I certainly do not declare myſelf the partiſan of his alternate verſes. I know

know not what effect they may produce on the ſtage, but in the cloſet they appear to me proſaic, and in ſome parts in the opera ſtyle. The piece in general is not good; the opening of the plot is embroiled; there is much uſeleſs reaſoning; ſome of the characters are ill ſupported, and ill marked; few of the ſententious lines are worthy of being committed to memory; and there is a want of probability, in more than one paſſage, which offends and ſhocks the reader. I believe, ſhould Voltaire live much longer, he will put his Univerſal Hiſtory into madrigals, or epigrams. True it is, dotage is apparent in his tragedy; but you muſt allow it is the dotage of a great man. Juſtice ſhould be done, and the homage rendered to his genius which is its due.

I have ſeen an anonymous criticiſm on his Univerſal Hiſtory, the author of which I ſuppoſe to be a Janſeniſt; for he dwells much on religion, and on various indifferent opinions which Voltaire has maintained. It might be paſſable, had not the author been ſo full of gall, and had he ſoftened ſome offenſive expreſſions.

I am really aſhamed, my dear marquis, of the letter I write to you: inſtead of fighting, and preparing for my campaign, I write an analyſis on new works. This brings to my recollection

collection what was ſaid by the tire-woman of Anne of Auſtria to Louis XIII. who was ſtringing pearls—"You are acquainted, ſire, with every trade except your own."——Forgive me this proof of erudition, and the dulneſs of my long letter, remembering the eſteem and friendſhip which I ſhall ever preſerve for you.

Adieu.

LETTER CV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 23, 1761.

THE laſt letter of your majeſty has aſſuaged the affliction which the two preceding had incited; that in which your majeſty mentioned the expedition into Heſſe, and the other in which you informed me that the cartel had been infringed. With reſpect to the affair of Heſſe, I at preſent regard it, notwithſtanding the ill ſucceſs it has had, as exceedingly uſeful; becauſe I have no doubt but the loſs of the magazines, and the money requiſite to form others, in a country entirely ruined and laid waſte, are among the reaſons which have induced the French to offer a ſuſpenſion of arms, at a time

time when they appeared to be ſo much ſuperior in numbers to prince Ferdinand.

With reſpect to the infringement of the cartel, I very frankly tell your majeſty, it is what I always thought would happen. The hiſtory of the three laſt ages has taught me to know the houſe of Auſtria. The baſis of her ſyſtem reſts on falſehood, which ſhe has always employed, even on occaſions when there was no need of any ſuch reſource. I am well convinced it was hoped at Vienna that you would recruit your army with leſs ardour, ſhould you depend upon an exchange of priſoners. But your majeſty was not the dupe of this ill-conceived artifice; and I am well aſſured that the Auſtrians will loſe more than you by an infringement of the cartel.

Nothing, ſire, is now to be feared on the ſide of Halberſtadt, Magdeburg, and the new March; ſo that you may employ yourſelf againſt your remaining enemies. The inactivity of the French is excellent, both at preſent, and in the effects which it will incontrovertibly produce. After the ſtep which the French have taken in offering peace to England, they will not ſtop ſhort in their plans to pleaſe the Auſtrians, who cannot but be in deſpair to ſee the negotiation with the Engliſh begun. Such was the end of

the league of Cambray, and ſuch it has ever been my opinion will be the end of this war.

From the manner in which your majeſty is pleaſed to expreſs yourſelf, I perceive you mean immediately to open the campaign, and to acquire new glory till your enemies ſhall be obliged to be more reaſonable.—While you, ſire, are making marches and countermarches, and while you are gaining battles, I am tranſlating Plutarch, to the beſt of my abilities, that you may read it in language that will appear to you more ſupportable than the old French of Amiot. I take the liberty to employ your copyiſt, who lives in my houſe, where all his wants ſhall be provided for. I mean to paſs the ſummer in a country houſe, five miles from Berlin, and there to work undiſturbed. My landlord has thought proper to ſell the houſe which I inhabit at Berlin; and, ſince I muſt remove, I ſhall immediately tranſport all my furniture to Potſdam. With reſpect to myſelf, I have accepted an offer which has been made me of a country houſe between Potſdam and Barnewitz, where I may walk and breathe a pure air.

Your majeſty need harbour no fears concerning the letters I ſhall have the honour to write to you. This excepted, till I have the honour to ſee you once more, I will ſpeak of no

ſubjects but thoſe of literature. When I depart for the country, which will be in about twelve or fifteen days, I will take care to inform your majeſty; but your letters may be addreſſed to me at Berlin, whence they will be ſent by the maſter of the poſt-office to Barnewitz, from which place I ſhall be diſtant only a quarter of a mile.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, May 16, 1761.

THE public papers all affirm that your majeſty is happily arrived in Sileſia; and that, at your approach, your enemies have retreated toward Bohemia. I have no doubt that you will make a ſucceſsful campaign, worthy of a hero like you; and that Fortune would bluſh were ſhe not finally to reward your conſtancy and valour.

The gazettes have ſaid that Voltaire had obtained leave to return to Paris; but the intelligence is not confirmed. Had the report been true, the repeal would have been occaſioned by a very bad book. I would rather ſuffer baniſh-

ment

ment to the end of my exiſtence, than once to have conceived the thought of ſuch a work.

I am buſy at my tranſlation of Plutarch, and I hope a great part of it will be finiſhed by the beginning of next year. I have you continually before my eyes; and, while writing, inceſſantly repeat to myſelf, "Beware—what will his ma-"jeſty ſay?"

To-morrow I depart for the country; your majeſty will continue to do me the favour to addreſs the letters you ſhall pleaſe to honour me with to Berlin; and M. Jordan, the poſt-maſter, will deliver them faithfully.

I hope your majeſty enjoys good health. Exerciſe and occupation will diſſipate the humours which have been occaſioned by the ſedentary life of the winter: I am therefore determined to follow the advice of your majeſty in this reſpect; for I perceive I am more or leſs ill in my ſtomach, according to the more or leſs exerciſe I take. Do not, however, propoſe to give me a company in a free battalion, unleſs you ſhall firſt ſtipulate with your enemies not to fight before eleven o'clock in the morning.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CVII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

I HEAR with great pleaſure that you are gone into the country; if you will but take exerciſe it will contribute to your health, and you will live more tranquilly there than at Berlin. I return you thanks for not having forgotten the tranſlation of Plutarch, which I requeſted you to undertake. You will render an important ſervice to the republic of letters, and to all lovers of antiquity *. Pray heaven that peace may precede the finiſhing of your work; my fears are that it will be much otherwiſe. I am as incredulous, relative to the pacific ſentiments of certain powers, as you are reſpecting the holy vial. I foreſee rivers of blood muſt ſtill be ſhed; and that fortune, to which all the powers commit their deſtiny, muſt magiſterially decide. Sing her ſome holy madrigal, my dear marquis; repeat

* The French themſelves are ſo well ſatisfied with the tranſlation of Plutarch, by Amiot, that, notwithſtanding its obſolete ſtyle, they prefer it to any other that has ſince been made, and reprinted it at Paris in the year 1784. T.

her the end of your breviary; and endeavour, if poſſible, to render her propitious. I promiſe her a ſtatue of gold, in imitation of the little ſtatue which the Roman emperors preſerved ſo carefully in the chapel of their lares.

Adieu, marquis; do not forget me; and remain perſuaded of the eſteem in which I hold you.

LETTER CVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, June 6, 1761.

I HAVE had the honour to receive one of your letters at Havelberg, the next day another at Rattenow, and I now anſwer yours from Potſdam. My ſpaſms in the ſtomach had become ſo frequent, that the phyſicians adviſed me to make a journey for ten or twelve days, to ſhake myſelf, and afterward to take the waters for a fortnight. Accordingly I went to Fehrbellin, from Fehrbellin to Kyritz, from Kyritz to Havelberg, from Havelberg to Rathenow, from Rathenow to Barnewitz, and from Barnewitz I am returned to Potſdam.

This journey of ten days has given me relief, and I ſhall be obliged to your majeſty not to take

take it amiſs that I drink the waters of Sans-Souci for a fortnight, that is to ſay, till the 22d of June; after which I ſhall return to Berlin, or, guided by circumſtances, ſhall remain at Potſdam, till I can have the happineſs of once more ſeeing your majeſty; nor do I think this fortunate day very diſtant.

M. de Buſſi is at London, and my lord Stanley * is at Paris; and it is my opinion theſe negociators will travel with more ſpeed than thoſe of the congreſs of Augſburg.

The gazettes are full of nothing but your treaty with the Turks; and they even add that you have received an envoy from the Ottoman Porte in your camp. What makes me ſuſpect the intelligence is that your majeſty has not mentioned a word of the Muſſulman ambaſſador, though I have the honour to be a great partiſan of St. Mahomet, and have viſited, with exemplary devotion, the ſeven imperial moſques of Conſtantinople. Should the ſervants of the prophet become uſeful to us, I will conſent to make the pilgrimage of Mecca and Medina; but, if Chriſtian princes would but be reaſonable, I ſhould prefer peace to the advantage of ſeeing the meſſenger of God, and of bringing home a

* Not my lord, Mr. Stanley. T.

corner of the cloth which covers the camel which annually bears a copy of the Alcoran to Mecca.

Pondicherry muſt be taken ſince the laſt battle which the French have loſt under the walls of that town. Belleiſle is at the laſt gaſp. The town is taken, and nothing but the citadel remains, which cannot be ſuccoured. Theſe events ſhould naturally promote the negociations at London and at Paris.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CIX.

From the King.

Kunzendorff, June 7, 1761.

HERE we are, my dear marquis, ſtill in the ſame ſituation. This profound calm may perhaps be the harbinger of a violent tempeſt. This the end of the month may announce. I am prepared for good fortune or for ill. Sing a ſhort hymn, however, to this ſame fortune, of whoſe protection we are in ſo much need. The queen of Hungary is determined on war. I have five years ſerved as a breaſt-plate, to darts hurled

hurled by the court of Vienna, and to the barbarity of her troops and thoſe of her allies. To ſuffer continually is a rigorous ſentence; and I feel that revenge, according to the ſaying of the Italians, may be a divine pleaſure; we muſt only be careful to ſeize the moment. My philoſophy has met with ſuch rude aſſaults that it ſometimes forſakes me. Whoever, after having been inſulted as I have been, ſhould ſtill have the power over himſelf to pardon his enemies, without diſſimulation, would be canonized. For my part; willing to cede my place in the legend to the firſt candidate, I confeſs my feeble virtue cannot attain this ſtate of perfection; and that I ſhould die ſatisfied, could I, but in part, avenge the wrongs I have ſuffered. But this muſt be as my good angel, chance, or fortune, ſhall pleaſe. In the mean time, till fate ſhall iſſue her commands, I remain tranquil and ſolitary. I reflect, ſince reflect I muſt, on the future; and read, and employ myſelf in ſilence.

There are prophets here who will have peace, others battles, and a third ſet who refer us to the year 1763 for the end of our warfare. Some of them muſt propheſy rightly; and accordingly they will become miraculous. Such ſeers reſemble the almanac makers, or aſtrologers, who write the words, rain, ſunſhine, wind, fair

weather, heat, and cold, to gratify the ſuperſtition of the people. I know not whether your countrymen will make peace or continue the war. I am the doubtful doctor; I know nothing, except that it is my wiſh again to find myſelf in your company, in my little retreat, far from crimes, cabals, the heroic follies of lunatics, and the tumults of a too much agitated life; ſuch as are found in my place, and in the crowd of courts.

Adieu, my dear marquis; do not forget thoſe who fight for you, and remain perſuaded of my perfect friendſhip.

LETTER CX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, June 20, 1761.

I RETURN your majeſty infinite thanks for your goodneſs in permitting me to take the waters for a fortnight at Sans-Souci: yet how could you imagine this place would make me think of you more than another? Wherever I am, you, ſire, are continually preſent to my thoughts; and your benefits, which follow me to all places, and my own gratitude, which is equal to

to thoſe benefits, inceſſantly make me remember how much I owe you.

I ſuppoſe I ſhall be at Berlin on the 1ſt of July, and that I ſhall there daily hear ſome good news. I have no doubt but that fortune will finally declare in your favour. Your knowledge and your fortitude will make her determine to aid the good cauſe.

I hear, ſire, with inexpreſſible joy, of the concluſion and ſigning of your treaty with the good and brave Muſſulmen; and, if thoſe worthy children of the great prophet will but act ſeriouſly, I can conceive no doubt of your ſuperiority over your enemies; eſpecially ſhould peace be concluded between the French and the Engliſh. The latter apparently will not belye themſelves, for the firſt time, and make a ſhameful peace, and injurious to their allies; for the Engliſh of the two laſt wars are not thoſe of the reign of queen Anne; and they appear to pique themſelves, within theſe twenty years, on repairing the blame incurred by their haſty ſeceſſion before the battle of Denain.

With reſpect to the Turks, ſire, I muſt own to your majeſty, I cannot reconcile what you have told me of your treaty, and of the continuation of the war; for either they will act or they will not. If they act, how great will be your ſupe-

riority! And, if they do not act, I do not perceive the advantages of your treaty, for the time preſent; yet the time preſent is the grand article.

In fine, while my feeble ſight is not able to penetrate this obſcure cloud of politics, I am inceſſantly praying that I may again ſee you tranquil, happy, and in the enjoyment of a permanent and honourable peace. Oh that you could rid yourſelf of all theſe cares, and here calmly come to live in the boſom of the arts and belles lettres at Sans-Souci! This charming abode daily becomes more pleaſant and more magnificent. I twice a day go to admire the moſt beautiful morſel of architecture exiſting, except St. Peter's at Rome. The eye continually meets new pleaſure, while it contemplates this ſuperb edifice.

The colonnade, likewiſe, is almoſt finiſhed; and would have ſurpriſed the ancient Romans, had it been placed in the gardens of Auguſtus. May peace, ſire, ſoon procure you the pleaſure of beholding all theſe beauties.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, July 2, 1761.

I HAVE finiſhed reading your Gaſſendi, and to you I hold myſelf indebted for the impreſſion he has made upon me. The phyſical part of his work, as it relates to the formation of bodies, the units of which matter is compoſed, and as far as it explains the ſyſtem of Epicurus, I think exceedingly good. I own many difficulties may be raiſed concerning his angular, round, and pointed atoms: however it cannot be doubted but that, if there be primordial bodies, they muſt differ in kind and ſpecies, that their various compoſition or arrangement may give birth to the four elements, and to the infinite productions of nature. Theſe elements of matter likewiſe muſt be impenetrable, hard, and ſecure from deſtruction. Epicurus and Gaſſendi have maintained this, who certainly have diſcovered ſome truths, notwithſtanding the impenetrable veil by which they are hidden from our curioſity.

I find very inſtructive parts in his treatiſe on men, plants, animals, and ſtones; and on the generation

generation and corruption of animated beings. Epicurus and he have been obliged to admit a vacuum, that motion might be poſſible. He likewiſe ſpeaks of attraction, and of light, as if he had divined the truths which the aſtoniſhing calculations of Newton have demonſtrated.

I confeſs I am not ſo well ſatisfied with his aſtronomy as with the reſt. Though he does not explain himſelf, he ſeems to incline to the Ptolemean ſyſtem; and dares not admit that of Copernicus, unleſs by diſpenſation from the Pope. His morality is no doubt the weakeſt part of his work; I find nothing good in it, except that which regards the prudence of thoſe who govern kingdoms: the remainder ſmells too much of his rector, who divides, ſubdivides, and defines words, many of which he employs to ſay very little.

The article on freedom is the weakeſt of all. In his ſeventh volume he appears to have been in haſte to finiſh his work; perhaps Bernier, his tranſlator and abbreviator, has not done him juſtice. To you, therefore, who can repair to the fountain head, I apply, that you may inform me whether theſe errors appertain to the philoſopher or the traveller.

Thus, my dear marquis, have I finiſhed a long book, to do which I was in haſte, leſt

Laudohn,

Laudohn, who aſſuredly is no philoſopher, ſhould rudely have interrupted my ſtudies. I have at preſent choſen ſuch books as I could quit without regret.

A propos of books—I am told that Voltaire has written a ſecond volume to his Candide. Let me deſire you to order little Beauſobre to ſend it me.

I this day received ſome melons from Sans-Souci, and when I ſaw them exclaimed—"Oh "too fortunate melons! You have enjoyed a "ſight of the marquis, which to me is forbid-"den. How drinks he the waters? Do they "agree with him? Is he cheerful? Does he "walk? Does he take exerciſe?"—To all this would you believe it the melon anſwered not a word; and to puniſh his ſilence I ate him to your health. When the months of July, Auguſt, September, and October ſhall be paſſed, I hope to write to you not on ſpeculative but on practical philoſophy.

Adieu, my dear marquis; cork up the crevices in your body well, that they may endure as long as the atoms of Gaſſendi, and may be ſecure from malady, infirmity, and thoſe diſorders which menace our frail machine. Philoſophize in tranquillity, * * *

In deſpite of his ſtyle and his Latin, Gaſſendi, the great ſcrutinizer of nature, remains doubtful between monſieur Moſes and maſter Epicurus. A lame ſyſtem, deſtitute of truth and ſcience, is no ſyſtem for me. Though, with a firm and vigorous ſtep, he takes proof as his guide, he ſoon begins to reel; and in his fear and exceſſive prudence fooliſhly ſupports himſelf on the crutches of error.

LETTER CXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, July 4, 1761.

AT length Pondicherry, that had been attacked and blocked up for more than two years, is taken; and the news was received at Paris at the ſame time when that of the victory of prince Ferdinand arrived. It is affirmed the Engliſh fleet has ſailed on a new expedition. Should all this not accelerate the negociations of M. de Buſſi at London, we muſt conclude that every rule of prudence and good ſenſe has been totally forſaken by the French miniſtry. Let theologians afterward invent tales, of the care which providence takes to place enlightened men at the head of kingdoms.

When I examine the conduct of the French I continually have a wish to write a work, intitled, —The Contempt of the Creator for the Creature. How great must be the affliction of Paris, where so many people are totally ruined by the loss of Pondicherry! And this is the result of the caprice of certain individuals, who were persuaded they had discovered the finest and most sublime of political systems. What would Louis XIV. say, should he rise from the dead, and behold France much more loaded with taxes than it was during the last years of the unfortunate war of the Spanish succession; and were he told that the West and East Indies have both been lost; that the French colonies on the coast of Africa are in the possession of the English; that more than a hundred and fifty thousand men have perished in Germany, either by disease or the sword; and that all this has happened in consequence of an endeavour to increase the power of the house of Austria? However great might be the astonishment of the monarch, it would still be much augmented, when he should hear that all these things have been occasioned by the counsels of a little huffey of the rue (or street) St. Denis; and under the direction of a bad poet, who was educated in the seminary of St. Sulpice.

The

The news which your majeſty has done me the favour to ſend me, have given me infinite pleaſure. I perceive you enjoy perfect health; and with reſpect to the conſequences of the war, I will never diſturb my quiet, when I ſhall know you are able to act at the head of your armies. I am well perſuaded your enemies will finally be obliged to grant you a good and honourable peace; and that all their vain efforts will only have concurred to impart a new ſplendour to your glory, and to immortalize your conſtancy and fortitude.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, The camp of Pultzen, July 9, 1761.

YOUR letter would furniſh me with materials for a large philoſophic commentary. I find it is neceſſary to examine the extent of human reaſon, the clouds by which it is obſcured, and the illuſions which lead it into error. I could cite numerous examples, which hiſtory affords, of the falſe reaſoning, and the bad logic,

of thoſe who govern kingdoms; and we ſhould find, after attentive examination, that the different manner of conſidering objects, and the paſſions, prejudices, and ſometimes an exceſs of artifice, pervert the natural good ſenſe which ſeems to be the inheritance of all men; inſomuch that ſome reject with contempt what others deſire with ardour. You need but to extend theſe reflections, and apply them to what you have written to me, in order to divine all I could ſay on the ſubject.

I am vexed that you have not peaceably continued to take the waters of Sans-Souci. Though your inquietude be a mark of the part you take in my ſituation, I fear leſt it ſhould be injurious to yourſelf; and it cannot in the leaſt affect the conſequences of the events of the campaign, which doctor Pangloſs would tell you were neceſſary in this beſt of poſſible worlds. We approach the moment when the dénouement will begin to manifeſt itſelf, and all will be in action. Recollect thoſe lines from the philoſophical poet Lucretius:

Sed nil dulcius eſt, &c.*

* But, above all, 'tis pleaſanteſt to get
The top of high philoſophy, and ſit
On the calm, peaceful, flouriſhing head of it. CREECH.

You

You know what follows. Between this and the month of November there are now a hundred and ten days: theſe muſt be paſſed with fortitude and heroic indifference. Read once more Epictetus, and the Reflections of Marcus Antoninus. Theſe are tonics for the relaxed fibres of the ſoul.

I have taken every meaſure which I thought neceſſary for my own defence. Kaunitz is preparing to make redoubled attacks; and I fearleſsly behold his preparations, well determined to periſh or to ſave my country. Though not of accident, we may be maſters of our mind; and not diſhonour the dignity of our ſpecies by a cowardly attachment to this world, which, love it as much as we will, we muſt one day leave. You will think me ſomething of the ſtoic, marquis; but we are obliged to keep arms of every temperature in our arſenal, to be employed as occaſion ſhall require. Were I with you at Sans-Souci, I ſhould yield to the pleaſures of your converſation; my philoſophy would be then more gentle, and my reflections leſs gloomy. The pilot and his ſailors muſt be active in a ſtorm; they may laugh and take reſt when they are ſafe in harbour.

I have

I have written what I thought of the works of your countryman Gaſſendi, in which I find many things ſuperior to his age. I only condemn his project of leaguing Jeſus Chriſt with Epicurus. Gaſſendi was a theologian, and this was the conſequence of the prejudice of education; or it was the fear of the Inquiſition, which firſt made him imagine ſo whimſical a partnerſhip. We even ſee he has not the courage to juſtify the great Galileo.

Bayle has extended all the arguments which Gaſſendi had imagined: and to me it ſeems that the former is much the beſt reaſoner, from his dexterity in handling his ſubject; and the perſpicuity of mind with which he has developed the moſt diſtant conſequences of thoſe principles more copiouſly than any preceding philoſopher had done. I have never ſeen the work of Gaſſendi, which you have mentioned, on Deſcartes; I have nothing written by this philoſopher except what Bernier has tranſlated. The refutation of the ſyſtem of vortices, the plenum, ramified matter, and innate ideas, if I am not deceived, would afford him a fine field. May my enemies plans of campaign be as ridiculous as the ſyſtem of Deſcartes; may I refute them as eaſily by ſolid arguments, not *in barbara*, but *de*

facto, as that ſyſtem has been refuted. I again return to my ſheep *, my dear marquis; and avow, notwithſtanding all the fine reaſoning of Gaſſendi, that Laudohn, O'Donnel, and thoſe gentry who perſecute me, have often occaſioned ſuch abſence of mind in me as to prevent my being maſter of myſelf.

Do not forget me, my dear marquis; write to me whenever the paſſage ſhall be free, and remain perſuaded of the friendſhip I have for you.

Adieu.

LETTER CXIV.

From the King.

The camp of Ottmachau,
July 25, 1761.

I THANK you, dear marquis, for the explanations you have ſent me concerning the opinions of Gaſſendi. I well ſuſpected that a mind ſo conſiſtent could not be capable of certain prejudices, which I at firſt placed to the account of Bernier. It is pity that we have no faithful and complete tranſlation of the works of this philoſopher. Ignorant as I am, I am the

* Alluding to the character of the woollen-draper, in the French farce called *L'Avocat Patelin.* T.

greateſt

greateſt loſer; you and your fellows read Latin, Greek, Hebrew, &c. while I only know a little French, and when that happens to fail me I am plunged in the vileſt ignorance.

I place more dependance, however, on your philoſophy than on your political prophecies. True it is that, judging from appearances, peace between France and England ought to be the conſequence of the victory of prince Ferdinand; yet nothing is leſs certain; nor do I confide in ſuch probabilities, till realized by time. You, no doubt, wiſh for news of what is paſſing here; and I can well imagine that an inhabitant of Berlin is curious to hear how we tilt in Sileſia. I can ſatisfy you in a few words.

Laudohn came from the mountains on the 20th, and advanced toward Munſterberg. On the 21ſt I marched to Nimptſch; on the 22d to Munſterberg, in his teeth; and hither am I come to oppoſe his projected junction with the Ruſſians. The latter are at Namſlau. I have corps by which they are obſerved; and therefore, let them turn on what ſide they will, I hope to be too ſoon for them. The whole affair muſt be decided in a few days. You ſhall be informed of all, nor ſhall I fail to relate facts with the greateſt truth. I would tell you more; but the courier, who is charged with important diſ-

patches, is on the point of departure, which obliges me to end with the ſimple aſſurance of my friendſhip and eſteem.

Adieu.

LETTER CXV.

From the King.

Strehlen, Auguſt 8, 1761.

HITHERTO, my dear marquis, we have done nothing but manœuvre; we have gained many trifling advantages, which I ſhall not mention, becauſe they are unworthy your notice. The Ruſſians, according to cuſtom, pillage in Sileſia, on the other ſide of the Oder. Laudohn is aſleep at Wartha; nor are we doing much.

Let not your imagination run too faſt: you are now ready to ſay—"Oh! No doubt, they are on the point of concluding an armiſtice."—Far from that, I aſſure you; for there is now leſs than ever any appearance of a ſuſpenſion of arms between the belligerent powers, whether French and Engliſh, Pruſſians and Auſtrians, Swedes, Imperialiſts, &c. &c. This intelligence may diſconcert

diſconcert your politics. The victory of prince Ferdinand, however, and the taking of Pondicherry and the Antilles, have not in the leaſt cooled the warlike ſpirit of the court of Verſailles.

Our campaign, according to appearances, will proceed ſlowly; and, as I ſuppoſe, will not become ſerious much ſooner than autumn. Offer up your prayers to Fortune, that ſhe may ſecond our efforts. The ſword, and not the pen, muſt lead to a general pacification. The want of money will effect that which reaſon and humanity ought to have performed. The battle will end for want of combatants. Time will tell; though I am almoſt tempted to believe we muſt make another campaign after the preſent.

I afford you ample ſubject for conjecture; more agreeable intelligence I would ſend were I able; but you muſt accept ſuch as the current moment ſhall afford. Continue peaceably to work at your Plutarch, and be a little leſs indolent in writing to me.

Adieu, dear marquis.

LETTER CXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Auguſt 29, 1761.

I SEE, by the laſt letter which your majeſty has done me the honour to write, that, notwithſtanding the difficulties with which you are ſurrounded, you enjoy a good ſtate of health. This, ſire, I regard as the principal point; being convinced that, while you are able to act, the projects of the enemy will all evaporate in ſmoke. In numbers your foes have the ſuperiority; but you are their maſter in intelligence, and the bravery of your troops: thus did Hannibal vanquiſh the Romans with much inferior forces.

Since the capture of Pondicherry, the finances of France have been in ſo pitiable a ſtate, that the jettons * of the French academy have been ſuppreſſed. This has given birth to many ſhort pleaſant pieces, with which Paris was immediately overrun. In one of theſe the author ſays

* This term has occurred twice before; firſt in Vol. VI. Letter XCV. and again in Vol. IX. Letter CXXIII. In the firſt inſtance, it is properly rendered gaming counters; in the laſt, as well as the preſent, it means honorary medals, beſtowed on academicians by the ſovereign. Municipal medals are likewiſe called *jettons*. T.

the

the academy ought to depute two orators, to harangue the ambaſſadors of Ruſſia and Sweden, and entreat them to reſtore that to the ſons of Apollo, from the ſubſidies which France pays their monarchs, which conſtitutes the principal produce of their literary labours, and which is ſo uſeful to all thoſe who wiſh to pay compliments. I cannot comprehend how ſo total a derangement in the finances can accord with the warlike ſyſtem of the court of Verſailles.

What is the Engliſh fleet doing? It ought already to be under ſail. Permit me, ſire, after the example of a great miniſter (D'Argenſon the fool) here to inſert an old proverb—Strike while the iron is hot. If there be any ſerious appearance of beginning negociation in England, nothing is capable of adding greater weight to the buſineſs than a ſecond enterprize like that of Belleiſle. The gazettes all tell us of the departure of the fleet on another ſecret expedition; yet we are now near the month of September, and it is ſtill in port. I hope this ſecret expedition will not reſemble that of laſt year, which was to have been undertaken about the ſame time, and which was kept ſo ſecret that nobody yet ever knew what it was.

Your majeſty is better informed than I am of ſeveral little advantages which prince Ferdinand,

and the prince your nephew, daily obtain; I ſhall therefore ſay nothing more of them.

M. Joyard, your maitre d'hotel, not knowing how to addreſs your majeſty, has applied to me, and has requeſted me to inform you that he has ſtill ſome effects at Lyons, of which he wiſhes to gain poſſeſſion, in addition to thoſe which he inherits from Peſne, his father-in-law. Leave of abſence for ſix months will be neceſſary to finiſh his affairs; and as he will find favourable opportunities, at the Leipſic fair, to undertake his journey, he will be under infinite obligations to your majeſty, ſhould you deign to grant him your permiſſion. Your majeſty has known him almoſt eight-and-twenty years; you are well convinced he is incapable of prolonging his abſence, a day beyond the time which it ſhall be your pleaſure to preſcribe.

You, no doubt, ſire, are informed that the Jeſuits in France are forbidden to take ſcholars, and likewiſe to receive any novice; and that this has produced much alarm. Thus the Greeks, in the decline of the Eaſtern Empire, diſputed on theological queſtions, at the time that their enemies robbed them of Egypt and Armenia.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

Berlin, October 12, 1761.

I HAD the honour to write to your majeſty, by favour of the governor of Glogau. I know not whether you have received my letter. I would have written again, but that I was firſt deſirous to gain certain information concerning a report which I could not credit. When I knew it to be true, I repeated to myſelf what I wiſhed to ſay for your conſolation; which is that, however great your genius, you are not a god; and that, after having acted with all human prudence, you neither could prevent nor foreſee things which appeared abſolute impoſſibilities.

Such, ſire, is what perſonally regards you, in the loſs of Schweidnitz. But how might a garriſon be forced in two hours, ſituated in a fortreſs which, if but moderately defended, ought to have ſuſtained a ſiege of three weeks after the trenches had been opened? I condemn no perſon, becauſe I depend only on public rumour, and on the report of ſeveral ſoldiers from the garriſon of Schweidnitz, who have

have found means to eſcape, and are come to Berlin. But when I think that, with two battalions of militia, we held out five days againſt more than thirty thouſand men, and ſuſtained two aſſaults; and when I afterward ſee Dreſden taken, without firing a gun—twelve thouſand men ſurrender themſelves priſoners at Maxen; and general Wunſch, who had cut his way, obliged to return by order from his general—Schweidnitz carried in two hours, and Glatz in four—I do not find any thing extraordinary in the manner in which the Engliſh acted with admiral Byng.

I again repeat, I accuſe no man; I am ignorant of the cauſe of theſe events; but this of Schweidnitz is ſo extraordinary, that it is impoſſible for your true ſervants not to feel the moſt afflicting grief. I am perſuaded, ſire, you will repair this vexatious accident without delay; but it is moſt mortifying that you ſhould, every campaign, be occupied in repairing errors in the commiſſion of which you had no part.

Affairs are in a good train in Pomerania; and the junction of general Platen with the duke of Wirtemberg has not coſt thirty men, not one baggage waggon, nor any loſs of proviſions. This Platen is what we may call a man.

The Auſtrians who were at Halle have fled head over heels at the approach of the brave general Seidlitz, who has twice this ſummer baſtinadoed the army of the Empire.

I ſay nothing to your majeſty of prince Henry, who, at the time that you were ſurrounded, conducted himſelf with the prudence of Turenne, and who has continually ſent us advices to Berlin that we had nothing to fear.

The French have again preſented themſelves before Wolfenbuttle, which place they are bombarding. They have committed cruelties and exactions, in Eaſt-Frieſland, a hundred times worſe than thoſe of the Coſſacs. Prince Ferdinand has detached a corps to drive them from the country of Brunſwic.

The Engliſh having recalled their miniſter from Paris, will apparently act with their fleet, which has tranquilly remained, during the whole campaign, in the ports of Yarmouth * and Plymouth.

It muſt be allowed, the French have laughed at England with their pretended negociations, and have made them loſe all the fruits they might have gathered during the campaign by the aid of their naval force. This conduct

* The marquis means to ſay Portſmouth and Plymouth. T.

drives

drives all the partiſans of the good cauſe to deſpair.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 23, 1761.

I IMAGINE your majeſty muſt have received two letters, which I have had the honour to write to you ſince the beginning of this month; one by way of the governor of Glogau, and the other by the poſt. I hear no news from your majeſty, and am much alarmed leſt your health ſhould be affected by fatigue and the preſent bad weather.

The French have been driven off and beaten before Brunſwic, the ſiege of which they have raiſed, and have immediately abandoned Wolfenbuttle. Their flight has coſt them about twelve hundred men, killed and taken; but this is what you muſt long ſince have known.

The Ruſſians are marching in Poland, on the ſide of Dantzic. They have made a woful figure this year, and you have charmingly deſcribed them in the two delightful pieces which

you

you have ſent me. They were reduced to ſo much diſtreſs lately, near Colberg, that their coſſacs came to beg bread, for God's ſake, at our advanced poſts.

M. de Verelſt, who has had the misfortune to loſe his only ſon, has demanded permiſſion from the States General to go to Holland for ſome months. He has requeſted me to inform your majeſty that he will paſs through Magdeburg, that he may, on his road, receive the orders which you ſhall be pleaſed to entruſt him with, from count Finck. He would already have been three weeks departed; but the uſe which he might be of at Berlin, ſhould any accident have happened, made him determine to defer his journey; and he will continue here till about the time of going into winter quarters. When I ſpeak of this miniſter to your majeſty, I cannot ſpeak good enough; he is one of the worthieſt men in the world, and every moment becomes more dear and more reſpectable to the citizens of Berlin.

I wiſh I could at preſent ſee you more tranquil; but I well perceive the campaign is not yet ended in Sileſia, and that nothing but the rigour of winter can occaſion the departure of the armies. I return, ſire, to the burthen of my ſong; preſerve your health, and all at laſt

will

will be well, in deſpite of the bitterneſs and fury of your foes. I repeat what I had the honour to write in my laſt letter: you are not a god, and nothing leſs could have prevented the accident of Schweidnitz; add to which, your campaign is admirable; the Ruſſian army is as much ruined as if it had loſt a grand battle. The reſt will be repaired, and of this your genius is my pledge.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXIX.

From the King.

Undated.

ALECTO deſcends to Amata, and infuſes her poiſon into her heart: ſhe awakes enraged againſt Eneas.

You ſee it is not ſufficient to fight, and that it is more difficult to ſubdue malignant women than courageous men. I am as deſirous of peace as my enemies are averſe to it; and though we exert ourſelves, this muſt be attributed to neceſſity.

You may continue to amuſe yourſelf this year by reading the gazettes, not with news of what

what is paſſing in the Apalachian mountains, or the quarrels of the Morlachians; but on what is to decide the freedom or the ſlavery of Europe, which a new triumvirate endeavours to enchain. Were the choice my own, I would rather ſit a ſpectator than be one of the actors on the ſtage; but, ſince the die is caſt, we muſt run the venture.

Happy the man in wiſdom's temple ſeated, &c.

I am, &c.

LETTER CXX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 3, 1761.

I AM far from thinking that individual accidents have not a prodigious influence over general affairs; but, from the beginning of the preſent war, I have adopted a maxim from the Telemachus of Fenelon, on which I have founded my principles—"Previous to the arrival of misfortunes," ſays Mentor, "every effort ſhould be made by which they may be prevented; but, when they come, we have no other reſource than that of contemning them."

What

What has ſtrengthened me in this opinion is, that I have continually ſeen our worſt accidents ſucceeded by the moſt lucky events. While you ſhall be able to act, I ſhall always have good hopes; and had you but ten men, and your health, I ſhould not deſpair but that at length I ſhould ſee you confound the projects of your foes.

We have been in the utmoſt ſurprize, at Berlin, to hear of the adventure of the Auſtrian officers, priſoners at Magdeburg, whoſe conſpiracies have been diſcovered. Theſe proceedings are fearful. How can officers, who have pledged their honour, thus forfeit it ſo unworthily? If all which the letters that come from Magdeburg contain be true, very ſerious reflections ought to be made on the police, and the guard which ſhould be fixed in that city. The army of the prince de Soubiſe is at length gone into winter quarters. He has ſent back to France fifty-five ſquadrons and twenty-two battalions. The French are arming in all their ports to act againſt England; and there is talk once more of building flat-bottomed boats, which would have appeared to me flatter* than

* It happens that the Engliſh will admit of the ſame play on words which is in the original, which I therefore think it my duty to preſerve. T.

the boats themſelves, had but Mr. Pitt continued in office.

In the mean time the Engliſh are proceeding entirely to demoliſh Belleiſle, that they may employ the ſtrong garriſon which they are obliged to keep there. Such is the intelligence affirmed in all the Engliſh papers.

I know not what Voltaire is doing; he has publiſhed a letter to prove himſelf an excellent chriſtian, and that he punctually attends maſs. That man will die as he has lived, agitated by a thouſand chimerical projects. His laſt work on Ruſſia has entirely failed.

Speaking of works, let me ſay, I have, for more than two months, diſcontinued my tranſlation of Plutarch, which I ſhall ſoon take up again; and I have employed this time in tranſlating the moſt ancient Greek philoſopher that is known to us, called Ocellus Lucanus. He has written a work on the neceſſity of the eternity of the world. He lived long before Socrates, Plato, Ariſtotle, &c. His work is ſhort but excellent; and, under the pretext of commenting on my author, I have added various diſſertations, at which the enemies of philoſophy will not laugh. I was induced to write this work, which I ſhall have the honour to ſend your majeſty printed in about a week, by the

ill-humour into which I have been lately thrown by ſeveral fanatics. Not a month has paſſed, this year, in which I have not ſeen ſome libel againſt philoſophers. Among others, there is one entitled the Anti-Sans-Souci; a large volume, worthy of the pen of a hackney-coachman. I wiſh your military enemies were as contemptible as your literary opponents. Their great war-horſe is the work of La Mettrie: far from endeavouring to ſupport it, when I came to that article, I thought proper to prove, that La Mettrie never ſpoke or thought like a philoſopher; but that, in various things, he fell into the ſame miſtakes as divines; and, which is the pleaſant part of the ſtory, I have proved this aſſertion paſt diſpute.

I have endeavoured to write with all poſſible decency; and I hope every man, who is neither fool nor fanatic, muſt allow that the ſentiments of Epicurus may be followed, and yet his diſciple may be a very worthy and a very uſeful man in ſociety.

I beg your majeſty's indulgence by anticipation, and entreat you to excuſe the faults you may find in my work, remembering the zeal which induced me to defend the good cauſe.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 12, 1761.

I TAKE the liberty to ſend your majeſty the book which I had the honour to mention in my laſt letter. May the Greek and Latin which your majeſty will there meet with inſpire you with no diſguſt! I muſt inform you they ought not to embarraſs perſons who do not underſtand theſe languages. The paſſages cited are all faithfully tranſlated, and the ſenſe is continually connected, independent of the Greek and Latin quotations. The work may be read in French, without interruption, and with the ſame facility as if neither Greek nor Latin were there.

I have endeavoured to prove, indubitably to prove, in this work, that the morality of the true Epicurean philoſophers is infinitely ſuperior to that of divines; that all the pretended philoſophic reaſons by which they endeavour to explain the divine Being, and the nature of the ſoul, are but bubbles of wind. I have admitted the truths of religion becauſe they were revealed; but I will give a good account of

this revelation in my tranſlation of Timæus the Locrian, and will bring it to the light of day. But while deſtroying the arguments of theologians, that the fanatic and fooliſh may not cry aloud, it is neceſſary not to touch their reed-like ſtaff of revelation, which I have even turned to my own advantage, and to the deſtruction of the philoſophic objections of the devout.

I have already informed your majeſty what was my reaſon for undertaking the work. I ſaw the libels which the Janſeniſts diſperſe with ſo much ardour againſt philoſophers with indignation, and eſpecially againſt what they call the Pruſſian ſociety. The awkward and ridiculous work entitled Anti-Sans-Souci completed my diſſatisfaction; and I wiſhed effectually to unmaſk the poſſe of hypocrites and mercenary ſcribes who deſerve to be held in diſgrace by all worthy men.

I was obliged to give up La Mettrie. He was one of the forlorn hope whom it was neceſſary to ſacrifice in the battle, a convenient victim; but I have well ſprinkled his tomb with the blood of theologians; and I hope that, in future, it will not be ſaid, in imitation of *Les Nouvelles Eccléſiaſtiques* *, that the mode of

* Eccleſiaſtical intelligence.

thinking

thinking of the philoſopher of Sans-Souci, and of the men of letters who ſurround him, may be eſtimated by the works of the phyſician La Mettrie.

I dare not flatter myſelf my performance merit your majeſty's eſteem; I am too well acquainted with your knowledge, and the inefficacy of my own talents; but I hope, in return for my zeal for the good cauſe, you will be indulgent, and will pardon the defects with which you will but too frequently meet in my book. The moſt fortunate thing that can happen to me is that you ſhould judge me, ſire, not according to my work, but according to the pleaſure I took in writing my work.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P. S. Let me requeſt your majeſty to read the preliminary diſcourſe, that you may form an idea of Ocellus Lucanus, and his philoſophy.

LETTER CXXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 24, 1761.

I HAVE read your verſes with admiration, and you ſent them me at a time when nothing leſs than the pleaſure they inſpired was neceſſary, to relieve the dejection into which I had been thrown by a wretched colic, which ſcarcely left me the power of thought; but I take patience, and, when I am in pain, or in languor, I repeat theſe lines:

Quoi! vous ne voyez pas qu'ici-bas la ſouffrance,
Sans connaître de rang, de roture ou naiſſance,
Atteint un criminel, ainſi qu'un innocent?
Chacun s'y voit ſujet, & nul n'en eſt exempt *.

According to my taſte, and weak judgment, I can aſſure your majeſty I have not ſeen any of your works which poſſeſſes greater force or more correctneſs than this laſt. I have determined to learn it by rote; for it will afford me true aid under every accident of life.

* What! ſee you not that, in this ſublunary world, pain, regardleſs of rank and birth, equally attacks the guilty and the innocent? To this all are ſubject, from it none are exempt.

I am

I am well perſuaded, like your majeſty, that all our ancient Greek philoſophers underſtood phyſics very ill; but wiſhing to give, in the diſſertations which I have added to my tranſlation, an idea of the different opinions of philoſophers, by ſhewing the weakneſs of the ancients I awaken the penetration of the moderns. Ocellus had little reaſon to believe the tranſmutation of the elements; but, among the ancient philoſophers, the Epicureans denied this pretended tranſmutation, the impoſſibility of which Boerhaave has in our times proved by the moſt curious chemical experiments. This is the ſubject of a note in which I examine the opinion of Ocellus, with whom I ſeldom agree in ſentiments.

Your majeſty will perceive I have, in a diſſertation on the eternity of the earth, preciſely ſaid that which it were to be wiſhed Ocellus had ſaid. If your majeſty will do me the favour to read my diſſertations, you will ſee I have not made the ſauce for the fiſh, but that I have boiled the fiſh that I might have the opportunity to make the ſauce. Forgive me, ſire, this poor proverb, becauſe it well explains my intention in tranſlating Ocellus.

The weather makes me tremble for your majeſty's health. Your laſt letter ſomewhat quieted my

alarms; for it was rumoured, at Berlin, that you had the gout. I hope you take ſuch precautions as will preſerve you from it all winter.

I have ſeen the preſents which you ſend to the Ottoman Porte; nothing can be more ſplendid, more ſuperb, and at the ſame time better imagined: ſhould they produce a good effect, I ſhall not regret the ſums they may have coſt, which certainly are more conſiderable than thoſe ſet apart for this purpoſe by France in a hundred years.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, December 8, 1761.

THE tale which you have done me the honour to ſend is well written, and well verſified; but there is only one ſtring wanting to the violin, and the able muſician to whom it belongs ſtill can play perfectly on it, and not ſuffer the others to be cut; of this I am well aſſured, and that it was not his fault that the firſt has been cut.

Your alterations in the Stoic are rather different

ferent readings than corrections, for there are ſome of the former verſes which pleaſe me full as much as the other: in fine they are both excellent.

I have met with two paſſages in which the alterations did not ſeem to me correct.

J'ai vu George et Auguſte, et le Czar, prince atroce *.

There is a kind of hiatus in *George et Auguſte*. *George et* is well, but not *et Auguſte*. The *t* is never pronounced in the word *et*, which is the cauſe of the hiatus. This is one of the errors condemned by Boileau:

Gardez qu'une voyelle à courir trop hâtée
Ne ſoit dans ſon chemin d'une voyelle heurtée †.

In fine, ſire, you are king in Jeruſalem; it is not for a petty ſcribe like me to condemn the high prieſt of the temple, to whom the myſteries of the ſanctuary are all known; though it ſeems to me that this line ought to be corrected.

The following is another paſſage to which I object; not to its poetry, but to the grammatical conſtruction.

* I have ſeen George, Auguſtus, and the Czar, atrocious prince.

† Beware leſt your too haſty vowel ſhould ſtumble on a fellow vowel.

Quoi! ne voyez vous point qu'ici-bas la fortune
Reſpecte ni vertu, ni pouvoir, ni naiſſance *?

We muſt abſolutely ſay, *ne reſpecte ni vertu*, &c. The omiſſion of the *ne* is too great a licence.

This, ſire, is all that the moſt rigid criticiſm can enable me to diſcover in your Stoic, which, in my weak judgment, is the beſt thing you have ever written, among your numerous other excellent productions.

An affair has happened here, the recital of which may perhaps amuſe your majeſty. Porporini has been accuſed by a girl of being the father of her child, and condemned in law to pay the girl a hundred crowns, and to keep the child to whom he is declared the father. Far from appealing againſt his ſentence, Porporini immediately paid the hundred crowns, and acknowledged himſelf the father of the child, which he has taken home to educate, and has ſent to thank his judges for having been ſo good as to repair the injury which had been done him by the ſurgeons of Venice. The whole city has laughed at the adventure. I have not yet ſeen Porporini, but I have requeſted him to give me a call to-day. It is ſaid he is in full joy of heart at

* What! do you not ſee that, in this world, fortune pays no reſpect to virtue, power, or birth?

having been announced to the whole earth the father of a child.

I have entreated the governor to ſend a letter in cypher to your majeſty, which has been written to me by a man of the beſt intentions. I ſhould immediately have ſent the original of that letter, but it appears to me that the poſt is no very ſafe conveyance, and I have rather choſen to truſt to the governor. Should your majeſty think you have no need of the offer made you by the author of the letter, you will ſtill perceive there are people who have a real affection for you; and that this perſon is, in this reſpect, worthy of praiſe.

Though I am well convinced your majeſty does not want the offer of this man, I imagine you will do well to return him your gracious thanks by the governor; for who can ſay what may happen hereafter? And the perſon of whom I ſpeak to your majeſty has conducted himſelf, on one or two very delicate occaſions this ſummer, with the approbation, and to the great ſatisfaction, of all good citizens, and eſpecially of ſome who are moſt uſeful to the ſtate.

Your majeſty loves truth, nor will you take it amiſs that people whom you know are devoted to you, body and ſoul, ſhould ſpeak ſincerely. I therefore am convinced your majeſty

will

will not diſapprove the liberty I take of frankly ſpeaking my thoughts on this ſubject.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, December 29, 1761.

TEN days ſince I had the honour to write to your majeſty, which honour I believed I never more ſhould have enjoyed. I have had an inflammation brought on by my curſed ſpaſms, and for three days I was thought paſt hope. At length, after having been four times bled, and taken a courſe of bark to avoid a gangrene, with a ſlight medicine when the diſeaſe was partly ſubſided, I am, for this time, out of danger.

The dreadful act of Warkotſch and the catholic prieſt I regarded as a tale; but when I ſaw the citation of theſe two wretches inſerted in the gazettes; when I heard they had both been taken, and ſuffered to eſcape, I exclaimed, Oh Frederic! what ſervants have you, while you ſo well ſerve your ſubjects and your country!

Gottſkowſky has been with me to ſpeak of his affair.

affair. He is much afflicted becauſe his credit appears to have been greatly injured by the accident which has befallen him. He entreated me to write to you on the ſubject, but I was ſeized with my illneſs about this time. It appears, from the reaſons which he has ſtated to me, that he is innocent, and that he really acted with good faith. He ſhewed me that he ſhould be obliged to give up a part of his ſtock in trade, becauſe of the perplexed ſituation of his affairs at preſent, but I bad him beware how he did ſo, till he ſhould receive an anſwer from your majeſty; till which time he promiſed he would proceed no farther.

The Engliſh, by their manœuvres, have found the ſecret, having three hundred and ſixty ſhips of war, to ſuffer eight wretched ſhips and ſix frigates to leave the port of Breſt, and thus prevent them from taking Martinico. Some fiend let looſe from hell muſt have interfered in all theſe accidents. Had I died ten days ago, my only grief would have been never to have ſeen you more; and my conſolation that I was about to quit a world ſo abominable and ſo mad. I would ſay more but am prevented by my preſent weakneſs.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, December 30, 1761.

WEAKNESS prevented me yeſterday, when I had the honour to write to your majeſty, from mentioning many things of which I imagine you are not well informed. The affliction with which I ſee how you are ſerved renders life a burthen to me. You, ſire, know my zeal; judge then how bitter were the feelings of my heart, when I was convinced, and ſaw with my own eyes the various follies which have occaſioned the loſs of Colberg, and the half of Pomerania; and that theſe follies have originated in quarrels, or the bad manœuvres of people in whom we here had placed all our hopes. Had your majeſty but ſent one of your boots into Pomerania, or had your brother, prince Henry, ſent one of his to take the command, Colberg would ſtill have been ours. One goes to the aid of the other, and brings with him twelve thouſand men without proviſions, which might eaſily have been collected, before the arrival of Butturlin in Pomerania: the conſequence was that, the day after his arrival at Colberg, he is obliged to depart with his corps, in ſearch of food; on his road

road he ſuffers the corps under Knobloch to be cut off; and thus occaſions the impriſonment of this general.

The other, who remained before Colberg, does worſe ſtill. He abandons, but does not deſtroy his entrenchments, leſt he ſhould render it difficult for Romanzow to ſtation himſelf there; he leaves Ruſſian priſoners in Colberg, leſt the proviſions ſhould not be ſoon enough conſumed; he loſes two thouſand men in uſeleſs attacks; and, in fine, to crown his work, he ſuffers three ſquadrons and the regimental drums to be taken at Stargard.

I do but repeat to your majeſty what all the officers and ſoldiers of the corps who are here proclaim aloud. Notwithſtanding the enormous fatigues which theſe men have ſuffered, they all are full of good will; it is not courage or zeal for your majeſty's ſervice which they want. How much reaſon, ſire, had you ſeveral times to obſerve that we have no need of arms but of heads! Never was unfortunate prediction more true.

All this, however, ſire, may yet be repaired; the grand article is your majeſty's health: you are now about to take ſome ſhort repoſe. I have been told you have had a bad cold in your head: conſidering the prodigious fatigues you have undergone,

undergone, how could it be otherwiſe? I hope warmth and tranquillity will rid you of the diſorder. For the love of God ſend me news of your health.

With reſpect to myſelf, I am on the recovery, and, conſidering the grief of heart I feel, I am but too well.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, January 19, 1762.

I HAVE this very moment received the two pieces which your majeſty has done me the favour to ſend, and which are perfectly well written. I inſtantly read them twice ſucceſſively; and I have met with two verſes which indeed are not defective, but one of which ſeems to me feeble; and the other contains a word which a Roman never could have uſed, becauſe it was not invented till the firſt age of Chriſtianity.

The firſt of theſe lines is in Otho, and the ſecond in Cato.

Au moins à cette fois je puis vous être utile *.

* For once at leaſt I may be uſeful.

Au

Au moins à cette fois appears to me proſaic, beſide that it would be more correct to ſay, *Au moins cette fois je puis vous être utile*; but the verſe would then be defective. This may eaſily be altered.

The ſecond line is very beautiful—

Oui, glorieux martyr de Rome et de ſes loix *—

Except that the word *martyr* was unknown to Cato, and took birth under the perſecutions which were ſuffered by the Chriſtians. It may at preſent be employed with propriety, becauſe it is in common uſe. Thus we ſay, he is the martyr of the unfeeling heart of ſuch a one; he is the martyr of his own obſtinacy, &c. But, in the mouth of Cato, the word does not ſeem to me well placed; eſpecially when Cato himſelf ſpeaks, and is ſpeaking to other Romans. Such, ſire, is all that the moſt ſevere criticiſm could furniſh, againſt two moſt excellent and well verſified pieces.

I come to what your majeſty did me the favour to mention, relative to my predictions of Leipſic, which have been well verified; for you have made one of the fineſt campaigns that ever was beheld; but neither I nor any man on earth could certainly have foreſeen that a governor would have ſuffered a fortreſs, defended

* Yes, glorious martyr of Rome and of her laws.

by three thouſand men, to be taken in an hour. Be it ſuppoſed that he had been formally attacked, and, having eight thouſand men, had loſt five in the defence of his out-works; would he not have deſerved puniſhment if, with the remaining three thouſand, he ſhould have ſurrendered the town before a breach had been made in the body of the fortreſs? And why did he not defend this laſt retreat, if he were too weak to guard the out-works? It is an inconceivable act that a man ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be forced, when defended by a rampart flanked with baſtions, and with a good moat in front of this ſame rampart. Certainly, ſire, this is what I did not foreſee, nor ever could have foreſeen.

Your majeſty ſpeaks of the foreign commiſſioner's office of Pomerania; as you muſt be a hundred times better informed than I am, I have nothing to ſay; but this office was not lately at Malchen in Mecklenburg. Had I leſs zeal for your majeſty I ſhould be leſs afflicted at all this; but my grief is extreme when I perceive the cares you take, the fatigues you undergo, and the good and glorious things you effect, are all rendered uſeleſs, either by the blunders or the want of experience of others.

Amid my griefs, I have had one conſolation, which is to know that you are in good health.

Fear

Fear of the enemy I have none; and I ſtill remain in a perfect conviction that, after ſo many vexatious events, ſome fortunate blow muſt finally arrive, by which affairs will all be reſtored to a good ſituation.

War is declared between the Spaniards and Engliſh, at which I rejoice, and think I have very good reaſon ſo to do. The Engliſh have no longer any ſeparate peace to make; and God knows what at length they might have been induced to conclude, tempted by the conceſſions that were offered them by France. With two hundred ſhips, they have remained with their arms folded all the laſt campaign, and have ſuffered themſelves to be duped and amuſed by the miniſtry of Verſailles, who were endeavouring to conclude a treaty with the Spaniards. I imagine they now think very differently; and it is certain that you at preſent are as neceſſary, at leaſt, to them as they are to you, for a hundred thouſand reaſons, with which your majeſty is a hundred thouſand times better acquainted than I am.

I have no doubt of the ſolitary life your majeſty leads; but, if you reſemble a Carthuſian, I certainly may well ſay I am one of the fathers of La Trappe. It is now, literally, eight months ſince I laſt left my apartment. I am

fortunately well lodged; and I ſmother my chagrin by reading the Engliſh papers, which I cauſe to be tranſlated to me, and Greek books, which I ſtudy in order to underſtand them.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, January 22, 1762.

YOUR laſt letter increaſed my alarms; and the vexations with which, as I may ſay, I ſee you overwhelmed, led me to fear leſt your health ſhould finally be utterly injured; but the news which you no doubt received, a few hours after you had written the letter which you did me the honour to ſend, muſt have convinced you that Fortune will, in the end, be leſs rigorous, and will diſpenſe as much glory to you as ſhe formerly did. In fine, behold one who is gone to the ſhades below, thence never to return, to throw oil into the flames of diſcord. The news has ſurpriſed us all, and the more ſo, becauſe it came unexpected. It was a report that had ſo often been falſely ſpread that, when it was firſt heard, we believed it to be fabulous.

General Seidlitz has taken two thouſand priſoners in the laſt action between him and the army of the Empire. Theſe are better than ſo many Auſtrian priſoners; for they are rather recruits than priſoners.

It is long ſince I ſuſpected the horrid perfidy of which your majeſty ſpeaks; but, ſince the ills they wiſh to bring upon us have not taken place, we ought not to afflict ourſelves at them, except ſo far as they are in future to be feared; and I perceive affairs in a ſituation under which it will be impoſſible for the ill will of certain people to be effectual, at leaſt for the preſent.

I have made a large croſs in my almanac oppoſite to the day which your majeſty has done me the favour to announce, and which I did not think was ſo near. Often have I had the honour to repeat to your majeſty, all will at laſt be well, provided you do but enjoy good health, and be but able to act.

Your majeſty no doubt knows that the French were on the 6th of December to give up Port Mahon to the Spaniards. Should they at preſent be in the humour to make peace, what have they now to give in exchange to the Engliſh? I ſee no means by which they may come to an accommodation, or improve their preſent condition, increaſed as their loſſes have been by war.

It has been diſcovered that the Daniſh envoy was acquainted with the death of the empreſs of Ruſſia three days ſooner than it was brought hither by the couriers, the firſt of whom did not arrive before Tueſday morning; for on Sunday the envoy ſaid to ſome perſons —" One of " the principal crowned heads of Europe is " dead."

In vain did they preſs him to be more explicit; he would add nothing.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXXVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

TRUE it is, my dear marquis, that favourable and unfavourable accidents ſucceed each other alternately. We have endured ſo many cruel and fearful misfortunes that ſome reverſe might well be expected, which ſhould afford us eaſe.

We ſtill have to enquire however what is the extent of our hopes. I have been ſo unfortunate during this whole war, both with the pen and the ſword, that it has inſpired great diffidence

on

on every occaſion; inſomuch that I no longer confide in any thing but my eyes and ears. I could write a long chapter on the different manners in which politicians loſe themſelves in their conjectures, nor would examples in point be wanting; and all becauſe they have ſuffered themſelves to be hurried away by their imagination, and thus to be precipitate in their judgments. This is what renders me tardy and circumſpect. Oh how excellent is experience! I, who was as thoughtleſs in my youth as a playful colt in a meadow, am now become as ſlow as old Neſtor; but I muſt add I am grey-headed, gnawed upon by grief, overwhelmed with infirmities, and, in a word, good for nothing but to be thrown to the dogs.

Your intelligence concerning Port Mahon is falſe, my dear marquis, as is that of your two thouſand priſoners and general Seidlitz. I do not wonder at theſe city rumours; we have them here. When we examine their origin, they are loſt in obſcurity, like the genealogies of great families. This is the moment for the inventors of tales, and the fabricators of reports. Nothing is incredible in which giants and fairies act no part; and few individuals are able to unveil truth, diſguiſed as ſhe is in her paſſage through ſo many mouths. You have always exhorted me

to take care of myſelf; but how may this be done, my dear marquis, joſtled as I am? Birds which are given to be the play-things of children, and tops whipped by boys, are not more tormented and ill-treated than I have hitherto been, by my moſt bitter enemies.

Adieu, dear marquis. As ſoon as I ſhall have any alleviating, conſolatory, and reſtorative intelligence to communicate, I ſhall not fail to relate it at length; but ſhould the contrary happen, I ſhall be equally ſincere. May the expected good quickly arrive.

Once more adieu; do not forget me.

LETTER CXXIX.

From the King.

Undated.

I AM neither dead nor buried, my dear marquis. My fever has left me, and I am at preſent as well as others. Your imagination depicts the future with a flattering pencil; but mine, leſs vivid and leſs cheerful, ſuppoſes nothing but difficulties, pains, dangers, and misfortunes, by which we are threatened.

I have indeed received news from the eaſt, but

but the affair is not concluded. They feed me with hope; I want ſomething more ſubſtantial. However, toward the 10th, a courier ought to arrive which will bring us Moſes and the prophets.

All goes well in Ruſſia. I cannot have poſitive intelligence ſooner than the 16th or the 18th of this month. Let us wait therefore, my dear marquis; patience, patience; for the world is to me the ſchool of patience, in which my ardour is all damped. I am good for nothing but to vegetate. The oil of my lamp is exhauſted before the wick: I ſhould at beſt be only fit to turn Carthuſian. This conſidered, what employment will you give me, ſhould peace ever be made? Muſt I grind colours for the marchioneſs, or copy muſic for your viol di gamba? In fine, calm your fears, my dear marquis; do not let my health diſturb you; and ſend me all the news you hear, eſpecially literary news.

Adieu; I embrace you.

LET-

LETTER CXXX.

From the King.

Undated.

I KEEP my word with you, my dear marquis, and communicate the good intelligence to you, piping hot, as I have received it. Our friend the Khan is on the march for Yaſſy, at the head of a hundred thouſand Tartars. He has ſent me a ſuccour of twenty-ſix thouſand men, and the Turks are repairing full ſpeed to Adrianople. I have been fortunate enough to reconcile their intereſts with thoſe of the Ruſſians; and to arm theſe two powers againſt the houſe of Auſtria. This was no eaſy work; and it was neceſſary to conciliate, in the beſt manner we could, intereſts ſo oppoſite, that they might meet in their preſent point of union. This is doubling the ſtakes, ſimilar to the trick which Kaunitz played me. If providence will but conſent, I may do my enemies all the miſchief they wiſhed to have done to me.

Do not therefore be aſtoniſhed at my inaction; but be certain that, as ſoon as I ſhall have wound up my machine, I ſhall effect more in a month

a month than I could in a year of any of the preceding campaigns.

This is a grand event; and muſt leave to poſterity, at leaſt for half a century, veſtiges of this obſtinate and cruel war. Rejoice, my dear marquis; henceforth we ſhall have none but good news to ſend. July and Auguſt will be the months of our greateſt progreſs; every ſtep we take will lead to peace, to the felicity of our poor nation. I begin to flatter myſelf I ſhall find balm to pour into our wounds, or an unguent for our burn, as you pleaſe.

Adieu, my dear marquis; we have not often an opportunity of ſending news of ſuch importance; and I ſend it you with pleaſure, perſuaded as I am of the part you take in what relates to me, and the proſperity of the country I govern. I embrace you, and ſeriouſly flatter myſelf I ſhall again meet you at Sans-Souci.

Adieu,

LET-

LETTER CXXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, February 2, 1763.

YOU may well imagine the joy I felt at reading your letter; this is the happieſt day of my life. I have ever been perſuaded that, in the end, all the projects of your enemies would vaniſh in ſmoke; but my fears were leſt, before ſuch deciſive event, you ſhould ſink under the fatigues which you have for ſix years ſupported. In fine, after a fearful hurricane, calm is come again; and I know too well the extent of your underſtanding not to be certain that you will profit as much as you can by the fortunate turn which affairs have taken.

You ought, in pity to me, to ſend me more good news. I have, without exaggeration, read your letter thirty times within ſix hours, and I ſhall read it as many more times. But you ſeem to have only mentioned one half of the fortunate things which have happened. You have treated me like a ſick man, who is too weak yet to ſupport the blaze of day. In reality, you have not acted unwiſely relative to my poor brain; for one degree of pleaſure more, and I would not have

have been anſwerable for its ſanity. Oh had I but the happineſs now to be in your majeſty's preſence, how many things could I ſay! So many ideas ruſh into my mind that I believe they would form a huge folio. I wiſh to commit ſome of them to paper, and ſend them you; but I wait for another letter.

I have ſtill need of elixir to perfectly recover my ſtrength. I reſemble thoſe ſick perſons who, having long lingered between life and death, ſcarcely can perſuade themſelves they are in no danger of a relapſe.

I therefore wait for a line or two from your majeſty, that I may yield to that lively joy which inſpires us, in theſe terreſtrial abodes, with thoſe ecſtaſies which the devout hope to taſte in heaven. It depends therefore on your majeſty to make me one of the bleſſed, and to render me a living ſaint; a thing beyond the power of all the popes in the world.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, February 12, 1762.

I WAIT for the firſt letter of your majeſty as the Jews wait for their Meſſiah; and, to own the truth, I am in great need of a little conſolation. The building is crumbling away on all ſides. I am continually incommoded ſince my laſt illneſs; and, if I do not prop up my poor body, it will ſoon fall to the ground; but, to render it effectual, a little gaiety is requiſite. I hope the firſt letter I ſhall receive from your majeſty will give me not a little.

The Auſtrians affect to ſpread a report, in moſt of the public papers, that you are inclined to make peace with them. I read, in one of the articles from Vienna, that they have ſent a new ambaſſador to that place to which you ſent what I ſaw ſix months ſince at Berlin. I imagine they ſpread theſe rumours only to induce certain people to believe you will not aſſiſt them, ſhould they declare war, and that you have offered terms of accommodation to the court of Vienna; but I ſuſpect every thing after what I have ſeen.

The directors of the academy have been with me, to commiſſion me to entreat your majeſty would permit one of their members, M. Sulzer, an excellent citizen, and a Swiſs by birth, to make a journey of two or three months to his own country, there to regulate ſome domeſtic affairs. Next to M. Euler, this M. Sulzer is the beſt of our academicians. He is a very learned man, and a good mathematician; add to which, he does not receive any penſion from the academy. He has, notwithſtanding, very prudently ſubmitted to the regulation which you made in the academy, that, during the war, no academician ſhould remove without permiſſion from your majeſty. Let me entreat you would be kind enough to ſend me a word in anſwer to this requeſt; for our loſs would be irreparable ſhould M. Sulzer, who does not receive any penſion, refuſe to be any longer a member in ordinary.

While writing this long detail to your majeſty, I have the fever; and my letter is well worthy of a man who does but enjoy half the faculties of his mind. Had I the power, I would willingly add ſomething on literature; but, at preſent, I ſhould reaſon like a man deſtitute of common ſenſe.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, February 16, 1762.

YOU work miracles as great as thoſe of the Meſſiah. Your letter has produced the ſame effect on me as the words of Chriſt did on the man in the palſy—"Take up thy bed and walk."—I was in bed with a cold, accompanied by a ſlight fever. I roſe, dreſſed myſelf, jumped and capered like a young kid in my chamber, and am at preſent in good health; not the leaſt pain of body, not the leaſt alarm of mind. You are, in truth, at once the greateſt king, and the greateſt apothecary, in Europe; your powders and emulſions are ſuperior to all the preſcriptions of pharmacy, ancient and modern.

Should the diverſion, which your majeſty has done me the honour to mention, take place, Fortune will, in three months, repair all the wrongs ſhe has done you in ſix years; ſhould it not, the peace between the Ruſſians and Swedes is of ſuch moment, that it will induce you patiently to ſupport the failure of this aid, of the utility of which I am very ſenſible.

What

What gives me great hopes, from this diverſion, is that the Auſtrians begin to be ſeriouſly diſturbed; which I clearly perceive, by their affectation in aſſerting, in all the public papers, that you wiſh to make peace with them. I am convinced they are deſirous to employ the ſtratagem of an approaching peace to put off the diverſion.

The Daniſh envoy, the arch-prophet of misfortune in former times of grief, wears the moſt melancholy face. He is exerting himſelf every where to report that there is no proſpect of peace between the Ruſſians and Pruſſians; and, when he ſaw the priſoners arrive from Magdeburg, he loudly affirmed, to all our miniſters of ſtate, that it was merely an exchange, much of the ſame kind as that you cauſed to be made by general Willich. Our good people of Berlin were ſimple enough to believe him; the poor folks were very much afflicted, and count Reuſs came to me, in great conſternation, to repeat the diſcourſe of the Dane.

It happened that I had received your majeſty's letter an hour before; and, without farther explanation, I aſſured him there was not a word of truth in the aſſertions of the Daniſh miniſter; and that I would pledge myſelf for the concluſion of peace between the Ruſſians

and Swedes. Our people of Berlin recovered all their joy; your name paſſed from lip to lip with benedictions; and you ought to be in excellent health, for, within twenty-four hours, more than fifty hogſheads of wine have been drank to it in Berlin.

The Ruſſian officers, who have paſſed this way, have teſtified the utmoſt joy at being the friends of the Pruſſians. They were magnificently regaled, for three ſucceſſive days, by various families, and they have drunken copiouſly to the health of your majeſty, and of the emperor Peter III. whom God bleſs and proſper. May all his enemies, and yours, expire with ſhame and vexation, at beholding their odious cabal deſtroyed in a moment; and may they endure as much affliction as they have cauſed ſo many worthy people to endure! There is not much philoſophy in the wiſh, but philoſophy itſelf is unable longer to contain.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXIV.

From the King.

Undated.

BY your letter of the 16th I perceive, my dear marquis, you have exactly ſeized the true ſituation of our affairs. You have underſtood every thing perfectly well; and you find your Daniſh envoy is no better than a blockhead. We have a Ruſſian here, who paſſed through Berlin as a courier, with whom I am very well ſatisfied; and, unleſs every principle of the human mind ſhould be nothing better than abſurdity, we muſt have made peace with Ruſſia and Sweden by the opening of the campaign.

With reſpect to other hopes, I ſhall not receive any certain intelligence ſooner than the beginning of the next month. Hopes are truly our due; for how great is the bitterneſs, the grief, in which we have paſſed our lives for theſe ſix years! Balm muſt be poured into the wound, which believe me is both neceſſary and good.

I am very glad I have cured you; this of all the political acts of my life will be the beſt. I

wiſh the preſent letter may be a new reſtorative, and that it may complete your peace of mind.

To divert you, I ſend you a Fable which I had the whim to write, and which will ſoon be followed by another; my mind is not ſufficiently calm for ſerious works, I therefore amuſe myſelf with fables.

Ah! my dear marquis, when ſhall I eſcape from this accurſed galley? I confeſs to you that the political pilot, and the general hero of romance, are the moſt troubleſome trades of this ſublunary world. Epicurus was in the right; his ſage ought never to interfere in public affairs. Perhaps we ſhould do better were we to chooſe our own ſituation in life; but Fate is our maſter, and aſſigns us to this or that poſt, which it is our duty to hold.

Inform me whether the people are ſatisfied at Berlin, and be perſuaded I love you always.

Adieu.

LETTER CXXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 1, 1762.

YOU aſk whether the people are ſatisfied at Berlin; I anſwer they are in a delirium of joy. The wealthy make banquets; thoſe of middling rank regale their families; and benedictions are every where beſtowed on your majeſty, as well as on the emperor of Ruſſia. You both ought to live theſe three hundred years, were the prayers of the people, glaſs in hand, but heard.

All the foreign gazettes ſpeak of the union between Ruſſia and Pruſſia as a thing effected. Thus all Brandenburg participates the joy of Berlin, and every letter that arrives here affirms the ſatisfaction is no leſs in other cities than it is in the metropolis.

With reſpect to myſelf, your majeſty may be aſſured that, ſhould the diverſion in queſtion take place in the month of March, my poor brain will be unable to hold any longer. I have been two days fit for bedlam, in the exceſs of my joy. I am very much the humble ſervant of philoſophy, but there are times at which Heraclitus himſelf

would ſay with Horace—"There is a charm in "madneſs."

I think, like your majeſty, that to pour balm into the wound is moſt proper. This will be the means of preventing the ill-intentioned from giving a ſecond wound. Your majeſty always thinks well, and on this occaſion admirably well.

The Fable your majeſty has done me the honour to ſend is charming, and written with that elegant ſimplicity which becomes this kind of poem.

The news of the ceſſion of Port Mahon to the Spaniards, which I ſent your majeſty ſome time ſince, and which you then regarded as fabulous, is verified. France gains three millions of piaſtres by this ceſſion.

Never did I think before I ſhould wiſh to grow older; but on this, as on many other ſubjects, I find I am deceived; I wiſh at preſent to be ſix weeks older.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXVI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Breſlau, March 6, 1762.

THE joy of the inhabitants of Berlin, which you deſcribe, has communicated itſelf to my heart. I have a foretaſte of the ſenſations I ſhall feel at the concluſion of a general peace. Our intelligence from Peterſburg is ſuch as we could wiſh; perhaps peace is there ſigned at this very moment.

I have not received all the news I could have deſired from a certain quarter; but I know there are troops on their march, and that the fear at Vienna is great.

I have every reaſon to hope that I ſhall ſucceed; as ſoon as I ſhall be more certain, I will partake that ſatisfaction with you, which ſo fortunate a circumſtance will give me.

In fine, my dear marquis, the clouds begin to diſperſe; and we may again hope to ſee a fine ſerene day, and the ſun in all his ſplendour.

I ſend you a Tale which I have written; while compoſing it, my head was full of the works of Boſſuet, and his impertinent variations, in which all

the myſtic reveries of the ſchool are explained. Angry at ſuch abſurdities, I wrote a fable to revenge myſelf on thoſe who paſs their lives in ſpreading ſuch nonſenſe. The obſcure grotto of the eaſt is the ſubject of the allegory, and the whole is clear enough to ſtand in no need of a commentary.

Rejoice, my dear marquis; continue calm, and in good health. Courage returns with hope; and I expect once more, before I die, to ſee you at Sans-Souci, where we will peacefully philoſophize, without being *in periculo mortis*.

Adieu, dear marquis; God bleſs you.

LETTER CXXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 9, 1762.

THE intelligence which your majeſty has done me the favour to ſend is admirable, nor have I any doubt that you will inceſſantly receive that which will accompliſh all your hopes.

We are not only enraptured at Berlin by being relieved from our moſt dangerous enemy, but are delighted to find we may do to our two principal

cipal enemies all the wrong they wiſhed to do, but which they have not done, to us. Your citizens of Berlin are really good people, and are well worthy of the affection you ſhew for them. Rejoicings are preparing here, an account of which I ſhall ſend you for your amuſement, as ſoon as an armiſtice, or a ſuſpenſion of arms, ſhall have been ſigned at Stargard. Imagine what they will do when peace ſhall be ſigned with Ruſſia; for the people are ſo angry with the Auſtrians and French that they care but little concerning peace with them.

Your Tale is ingenious, charming, and light; not a line, not a word, not a ſyllable to correct. The idea is new, and the application juſt. I have the honour to repeat, this little work is charming. You have infuſed all that gaiety into it which your mind muſt feel at the preſent ſituation of your affairs.

I wiſh the diverſion may take place, for it would completely puniſh your enemies for their audacious phrenzy, to which they imagined they need not ſet any bounds. But theſe haughty Auſtrians and proud French no longer have any advantage, except in the Dutch gazettes, all the editors of which they have bought. In one of the 29th of February, and again on the 2d of March,

March, there was a formal denial of any negociation on foot between Pruſſia and Ruſſia.

I wait the arrival of a letter from your majeſty, in which you will deign to inform me whether I may regale theſe gentlemen with a ſhort work intitled—*Lettre d'un Baron Weſtphalien à un Bourgeois d'Amſterdam* *. I have long been out of patience by the rhodomontades of the Auſtrians, and the gaſconades of the French.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 23, 1762.

YOUR majeſty no doubt has received the letter I did myſelf the honour to write in anſwer to yours of the 6th of this month, I therefore ſhall not repeat how ingenious and how charming I thought your little Poem.

The great and good occupations which at preſent employ your time, muſt neceſſarily intrude upon your cuſtomary moments of leiſure.

* A Letter from a Weſtphalian Baron to a Citizen of Amſterdam.

I cannot

I cannot however forbear to inform you of two pleaſant circumſtances, the firſt of which, perhaps, you already know.

The king of France raiſed a baſtard, which he has had by one mademoiſelle de Roman, to the rank of duke of Vendome, a legitimate prince of the blood, at the moment of the child's birth. It is affirmed that, had this miſtreſs been brought to bed at Verſailles, La Pompadour would have been immediately diſmiſſed; and that the duke de Richelieu had ordered matters in the beſt manner he could to produce that effect. The news comes from the Dutch ambaſſador, and he received it from the ambaſſador of France.

The other article makes much noiſe at Verſailles. On the day of the exile of marſhal de Broglio, the play of Tancred, by Voltaire, was acted at the French theatre in Paris. In the fifth or ſixth ſcene of the firſt act there are lines, the ſenſe and words of which are nearly theſe—"Tancred is a hero; and, notwithſtanding the "cabal by which he is baniſhed, the people "love him, and know his merit." Whether the actreſs intentionally applied this paſſage to M. de Broglio, or endeavoured to ſpeak it in a ſuperior manner, the lines produced ſo great an effect in the pit that they were applied to the marſhal. The applauſe was exceſſive, and the actreſs was obliged to repeat them ſeveral times.

The court ordered the lieutenant-general of the police to enquire into this affair; and the actreſs has been obliged to make oath ſhe had no other intention than that of acting her part well. Some ſixty of the applauding auditors have been taken up, againſt whom formal proſecutions are commenced. Can any thing on earth be more ridiculous, except the arrets of the parliaments for the expulſion of the Jeſuits, and thoſe of the council for their protection? All Paris is more occupied by theſe affairs than by Martinico, where the Engliſh papers affirm that, after having been twice repulſed, they have at laſt diſembarked twelve thouſand regular troops.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXXXIX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Undated.

YOUR letter found me in a fever, which is the return of an epidemic fever, now common in the city, and a deſcription of which Catt can give you.

Your two articles of intelligence from Paris bear the characteriſtic of frivolity, the goddeſs of

of the country. I do not, however, believe that, had madame Raimon * been brought to bed at Verſailles, La Pompadour would have been diſmiſſed; becauſe the king of France is a man of habit, and has placed his confidence in that woman, who, during ſeven or eight years, has governed his kingdom to his ſatisfaction. But even ſhould this creature be diſmiſſed, do not imagine I ſhould be any great gainer; a Saxon faction is formed in that country, which would be equally inimical to my intereſts.

What meanneſs is it in the court to proſecute the fellows who applaúded the paſſage in Tancred! This really is moſt wretched conduct; as indeed is the oppoſition between the council and the parliament for and againſt the Jeſuits.

But my head is ſo weak, my dear marquis, that I can add nothing more, except that the emperor of Ruſſia is a divine man, in honour of whom I ought to erect altars.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I can add no more.

* This variation of the name exiſts in the Berlin edition. T.

LET-

LETTER CXL.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 26, 1762.

I HAVE enjoyed the ſweet ſatisfaction of converſing, during the ſpace of two hours, with M. Catt, concerning your majeſty; and he has very candidly indulged my curioſity, and anſwered all my queſtions. How often have I pitied your majeſty! But I return to my old prophecy; at length, thank Heaven, our woes are all ended, and nothing remains but joy. M. de Catt has informed me that he met with count Hordt near Breſlau; you have therefore learned many more things which muſt have been very ſatisfactory.

I have read your anſwer to M. D'Alembert with infinite pleaſure; there is nothing which ought to or can give him offence; it is ingenious pleaſantry, without bitterneſs or gall: yet really the mathematicians, D'Alembert and the French academy, are altogether becoming madmen. What is this philoſophic ſpirit, ſo much vaunted, which leads us to prefer Virgil to Taſſo *, and to retail with an important and deciſive mien ſo many paradoxes? Thus, in the times of Seneca

* Did not the marquis mean to ſay Taſſo to Virgil?

and

and Lucan, the taſte of the Auguſtan age began to decline.

M. de Catt is going to paſs three days at Wittemberg, to converſe with his countryman, who has entreated him to meet him half-way on the road between Berlin and Leipſic, being in haſte to return to Switzerland. I congratulate your majeſty on your poſſeſſing a perſon ſo truly attached to you as is M. de Catt. You will recollect what I had the honour to write to you, in the month of April laſt, concerning this gentleman. I had then heard many things, of which I have ſince obtained more certain information, which demonſtrated to me how eſſential it was that your majeſty ſhould not admit into your private apartments, in which your papers are depoſited, any but men of known probity, who ſhould be entirely devoted to you.

Your majeſty has done me the favour to inform me you will allow me to take the waters at Sans-Souci. I ſhall profit by this permiſſion, with your good leave, toward the end of the next month; that my health may be entirely recovered, and that I may be enabled to pay my reſpects to your majeſty, when I ſhall have the happineſs to ſee you again, with an aſſiduity which may compenſate for the chagrin which has been occaſioned by your abſence.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXLI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 29, 1762.

I SIT down to anſwer the letter your majeſty has done me the honour to write, the moment it is come to hand. Man is not made for continued happineſs. For four days I had been tranquil and cheerful, and I am now alarmed by a thouſand fears for the ſituation of your health. I hope, notwithſtanding, that your diſeaſe will have no bad conſequences, and that the epidemic fever which is at Breſlau is ſimilar to that which we have here at Berlin, and by which, within this fortnight, almoſt every body has been attacked; but which, when moſt obſtinate, ſeldom continues longer than ſeven or eight days.

What you have done me the honour to ſay concerning the emperor of Ruſſia, has given me double pleaſure; firſt, becauſe, though your body were incommoded, your mind muſt be contented, which will very much contribute to the recovery of your health; and again, becauſe I hope the friendſhip, which this great prince ſo very ardently teſtifies for your majeſty, will, by the union of your common intereſts, as well as your

common affections, conduce to put an end to our troubles, and lead to peace. When ſhall I have the pleaſure again to ſee you in tranquillity?

Your majeſty may judge of my preſent fears; let me earneſtly entreat you, ſhould you not have time to write a word yourſelf, becauſe of the affairs by which I know you muſt be encumbered, to cauſe one of your chamber domeſtics to write me an account of the ſtate of your health. I proteſt I ſhall not live till I hear from your majeſty.

You cannot, ſire, but be well ſatisfied with the prince of Pruſſia. Every perſon who has ſeen him at Magdeburg relates a thouſand circumſtances in his favour. You certainly perform excellent things; and the act of ſending for him to be with you is moſt excellent, for a thouſand and a thouſand reaſons. He will profit more in one day with you than he would have done in ſix months at Magdeburg.

I once again requeſt your majeſty would ſend me news of your health.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXLII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 3, 1762.

YOUR laſt letter, in which you were kindly pleaſed to inform me you were rid of your fever, perfectly tranquillized my mind. For M. de Catt being gone to Wittemberg, to viſit his relation, I knew not what this fever might be, and was continually tormented by the moſt gloomy ideas, recollecting the malady that was prevalent at Breſlau, the winter that I was there. Fortunately count Hordt, who departed two days after the arrival of the letter which you did me the honour to write, had ſaid that it was only a fever that was the conſequence of a cold. Count Reuſs brought me this good news, and came to me for that expreſs purpoſe. I loved him much before, becauſe he is a good and excellent citizen, devoted to you in heart and mind; but I now love him ſtill better; and had he preſented me with a hundred thouſand crowns, he would not have given me one quarter of the pleaſure.

Martinico is taken, and, excluſive of the ineſtimable advantages of that conqueſt, the reſult

ſult will be of ſtill greater utility. Thirty-four ſhips of war are immediately enabled to act againſt the Spaniards, with an army of ſixteen thouſand regular troops which will be equal to an army of eighty thouſand in Europe.

Beſide this advantage, another very conſiderable one has happened. An earthquake has juſt deſtroyed the port of Carthagena in America; the ramparts and fortifications are moſt of them fallen, and the two forts of Santa Margarita, which defended the entrance of the harbour, are entirely ruined. Nothing can be more certain than this intelligence, and a narrative of the diſaſter is inſerted in all the papers. Thus are the Pondicherry and the Cape Breton of the Spaniards deſtroyed, without having afforded the Engliſh the leaſt trouble.

I neither ſee black nor white *. Not black, becauſe we may employ, this campaign, that army with which we faced the Ruſſians, and the corps which we oppoſed to the Swedes, againſt the Auſtrians. Your majeſty muſt have perceived, from my letter, that I never placed any great dependence on the perſons whom I met at the houſe of M. d'Andreſel. Thus, not having founded the leaſt hopes on their aſſertions,

* A proverbial expreſſion, the ſenſe of which cannot be miſunderſtood. T.

I do not eſtimate them at any thing, in my manner of reaſoning.

I do not ſee entirely white, becauſe I know that the utmoſt prudence of a general may be rendered ineffectual by the ſtupidity or the cowardice of ſubalterns; of which truth, unfortunately, I have but too many examples. But I confide in your intelligence and your ſuperior talents; you will ſupply whatever ſhall be wanting.

What if you were to doubt, and ſay—How if prince Ferdinand were to be beaten?—Why ſhould he be ſo, ſince he has hitherto always beaten his enemies?—What if prince Henry were to meet with ſome diſadvantage?—Why, being now ſtronger than ever, ſhould he not act as well as he has done hitherto?—Well, but what if the emperor of Ruſſia were to die?—Why ſhould he die? He is young, is in good health; and the preſent age is not the age of Medicis—What if I, the king of Pruſſia, were to be beaten?—If ever that ſhould happen, I conſent to loſe my head.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXLIII.

From the King.

April 8, 1762.

YOU are cheerful and good-humoured, my dear marquis, nor ſhall it be my part to afflict you by my melancholy dreams: beſide, our thoughts, be they gloomy or gay, have no influence on affairs; they continue their train; accident, good or bad, muſt be taken as it comes; and our griefs muſt be endured, ſhould fortune be averſe.

I am at preſent deep in negotiation; all goes as I could wiſh at Peterſburg; and I venture to tell you that this country, from which you hoped nothing, will fulfil my wiſhes, though a month later than I could have deſired. Toward the month of May, there will be a fine ſatanical feſtival held in our poor Europe, and ſuch are the means by which we muſt put an end to this deteſtable war.

I am once more reading the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of Fleury, to which I accuſtom myſelf without difficulty, and which will hold out to the month of July. It is a tough morſel, which will furniſh food for half a campaign. I ſay

no more at preſent; my dear marquis, I am in expectation of great news, which I will ſend you before it has time to cool, as ſoon as it comes to me.

Adieu: I embrace you.

LETTER CXLIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 11, 1762.

YOUR majeſty's letter has made my hopes mount ten degrees. You ſpeak of my cheerfulneſs; but, be this as great as it may be, I ſtill think it very moderate; and cannot but conſider it as a miracle that my poor brain ſhould not be totally turned ſince the month of February. But ſhould what you mentioned to me relative to the people whom I formerly met at the houſe of M. d'Andreſel take place, I will be anſwerable for nothing; I ſhall perhaps be obliged to ſtick ſome thirty pins into my breech, to oblige the vital ſpirits to deſcend, inſtead of mounting with too much rapidity up to the brain. Pleaſantry apart, ſhould I ever learn that the motions which you expect to be made have taken place, I would not be

anſwerable that my joy ſhould not excite emotions of dangerous exceſs. I am well ſenſible of the reſult of an event ſimilar to that for which you hope, and of which I cannot but ſee the happy conſequences; nor can I be entirely calm till I ſhall learn it has actually happened. Permit me, ſire, to cite a line from one of our beſt poets:

Je le ſouhaite trop pour le croire ſans peine *.

But I ſee ſo many good things on another ſide, that I wait with patience for that which I wiſh for moſt at preſent.

Your majeſty no doubt knows that the Engliſh have taken thirty-ſix of the largeſt privateers of France at Martinico. The loſs of this iſland, in one ſingle article, is equivalent to thirty millions of livres. (One million, two hundred and fifty thouſand pounds ſterling). A hundred thouſand cheſts of ſugar were annually tranſported from Martinico to France, each cheſt containing ſix hundred weight, which amount to ſixty millions of pounds of ſugar. If we rate each pound at ten ſous, which are equal in value to three of our old gros, you will find, without any great calculation, the ſum equals thirty millions of livres; conſequently the double of the revenue which the electorate of Hanover yields in the moſt flouriſhing times

* For this I wiſh too much to give it eaſy belief.

of peace. True it is, the ſubjects of the king of France, and not himſelf, ſuffer the loſs of this conſiderable ſum; but the wound is equally deep with reſpect to the kingdom, and will long continue to bleed.

It is here affirmed you are putting the palace of Charlottenburg in order; if your majeſty happen to recollect the charming papering for rooms which was ſhewn you by the officers and the ladies at Leipſic; and ſhould you think proper to make uſe of ſome of it, conſidering that, becauſe of its cheapneſs, a room may be prepared for little more than forty crowns currency; the paper manufacturer at Rheinſberg, who is a gentleman in the ſuite of prince Henry, and who is come to requeſt my recommendation to your majeſty, will ſend you ſome of the beſt patterns.

M. de Catt is better; he has met with a good ſurgeon here who has afforded him much relief, and who has promiſed to enable him, in twelve days, to depart to join your majeſty, and to make the campaign without inconvenience to himſelf, provided he will but be careful, and not hereafter be as bad a jockey as St. Paul, of Chriſtian memory.

All the public papers ſay that the fleet, which has taken Martinico, is gone to pay a viſit to the

the Spaniards at the Havannah, and, by the potent arguments of powder and ball, to borrow ſome millions of piaſtres—So be it.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXLV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, April 23, 1762.

I WELL ſuſpected, from certain things which I had read in the public papers, there were ſome dark manœuvres carried on at a court in which, ſince the change of the miniſtry, weakneſs appears to have ſucceeded fortitude, in ſpite of the unhoped-for advantages fortune ſeems to beſtow on people who are ſo little qualified to profit by them.

I hope, ſhould the ancient ſubjects of Mithridates put themſelves in motion, all will do marvellouſly well, and that you may then ſuffer thoſe who act ſo contrary to all rules of politics to commit as many follies as they pleaſe, without being of any injury to yourſelf. I expect a confirmation of intelligence from the ancient enemies of Pompey with infinite impatience; I place much more faith in their promiſes than in

thoſe

thoſe of the people I formerly met at the houſe of M. d'Andreſel.

I have requeſted M. de Catt, who will have the honour to deliver my letter to your majeſty, to mention a thing to you which may be uſeful, but which I durſt not entruſt to paper, becauſe no one can tell what accidents may befal a traveller. M. de Catt, with whom I have had the pleaſure daily to converſe of your majeſty, can likewiſe inform you of the life I have led for theſe ten months.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXLVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, April, 1762.

I FORGOT to give M. de Catt the two pieces of M. d'Alembert which your majeſty did me the favour to communicate; I have the honour to return them. They contain good, bad, and ſingular things. It is vexatious to find that the ſpirit of paradox, which ſoon or late will ruin good taſte, and at length be deſtructive of common ſenſe, ſhould ſucceed to the fine genius of the age of Louis XIV.

I learn

I learn your majeſty is at work on the fathers of the church. I have often had the honour to remark to you that nothing was wanting to your courſe of reading but ſome dozen volumes in folio; after which you might diſpute with Don Calmet and all the Benedictines on earth.

I am running over the ſcripture, and the remarks I make may be ſerviceable to the notes I am writing on Timœus the Locrian, whoſe works I have tranſlated, they having never appeared in the vulgar tongue. This Timœus the Locrian is a madman of the firſt rank; not a word of ſenſe throughout his works: but, as his philoſophy was the baſis of that of the Pythagoreans, and of the primitive Chriſtians, they will furniſh me with excellent diſſertations.

When I left your majeſty, I was ſtammering Greek; and when I ſhall meet you again, you will find me as learned as Dacier and Salmaſius. For my knowledge in this tongue, which ſerves as my amuſement, am I indebted to the chagrin which I have ſuffered for eighteen months. My mind muſt either have been occupied, that it might not be diſturbed by the affliction which this infernal war has incited, or I ſhould have died with grief. Remain perſuaded, ſire, that, except yourſelf, no perſon has more ſenſibly felt the misfortunes with which we have ſometimes been

been aſſaulted. I was overwhelmed by two mortal fears; the firſt regarded the ſafety of the ſtate, and the ſecond, which was much the moſt conſiderable, related to your own perſonal preſervation. At length, thanks be to Heaven, our alarms are all ended, and, in a few months, I hope to have the pleaſure of ſeeing your majeſty, tranquil and contented, in the boſom of peace, and enjoying that ſweet repoſe which your watchings and your fatigues have well merited.

I expect a letter from your majeſty to-day or to-morrow, and am in firm hopes of there finding a confirmation of the good news which your majeſty has done me the favour to intimate, and which incited a degree of pleaſure which entirely reſtored me to health.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXLVII.

From the King.

Breſlau, April 29, 1762.

I BEGAN to languiſh like a flower that had long been deprived of the dews of heaven, when Catt gave me your letter. This celeſtial dew reanimated and reſtored me to life. It is

pleaſant, my dear marquis, that you ſhould be reading the New Teſtament, and I the fathers of the church. What demon can have inſpired us with theſe ideas? Tell me by what ſympathy our minds have been directed, at the ſame time, toward the ſame ſubjects! I believe we neither of us knew the other's intention.

I confeſs I am aſtoniſhed at the extreme wanderings of the human mind, whenever I read ſuch diſputes concerning dogmas and myſteries; however, I can ſay nothing which you do not already know. I can ſee at this diſtance, by your deportment, that you are wiſhing for good news: I am fortunate enough to be able to gratify your wiſhes.

From Ruſſia I expect a courier with the treaty of peace and alliance on the part of Sweden. The mediators break the wind of every poſt-horſe in their great ſpeed, that the peace may be ſigned.

Nor is this all; the ſucceſſor of Mithridates is actually in the field with a large reinforcement. The people on whom the new-born ſun looks down are equally in motion; treaties are made; all is arranged; ſo that we may depend on the accompliſhment of my hopes. Such is the news for which we are waiting, but

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it is intelligence ſo good that we may pardon its tardineſs.

I therefore at preſent hope, with good reaſon, that this year will be the end of our labours. Catt has mentioned poor Gotter to me, as a man in the agonies of death. Alas! I ſhall find nothing but the walls and you, my dear marquis, at Berlin; no more acquaintance, not a ſoul, but ſhall perceive I have ſurvived this whole unfortunate generation.

I have buſineſs which prevents me from continuing; I will tell you more when I ſhall have more leiſure. Adieu, my dear, my good, my only marquis; I embrace you with all my heart.

LETTER CXLVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, May 3, 1762.

YOUR majeſty muſt have previouſly imagined the joy which the receipt of the laſt letter you have done me the honour to write muſt inſpire; and I was the more delighted becauſe knowing how much good *might* arrive from the eaſt, I never could well perſuade myſelf

ſelf this good *would* arrive. Now more than ever, ſire, you muſt be careful of your health, that you may bring all things to perfection, and afterward retire in tranquillity to Sans-Souci, there to recover from all the enormous fatigues which you have without relaxation for ſix years ſuſtained.

I have no literary intelligence with which to acquaint your majeſty, except two articles which prove that the wicked are ſometimes though not always puniſhed. La Pompadour has loſt an eye, and the other will ſoon ſuffer the ſame fate. This woman will undergo the doom of Œdipus. A proof of the exiſtence of providence is ſtill ſomething; though to render this proof irrevocably convincing, ſhe muſt undergo the deſtiny of Cartouche.

The Jeſuits will ſoon be entirely rooted out of France: their colleges are already ſhut up, and their wealth, in part, beſtowed on the principals of the ſeminaries who are to be charged with the education of youth. Here is an event unexpected by all Europe. I have the honour to ſend your majeſty an engraving, done at Paris, the execution of which is very bad, but the thought is ingenious enough. All orders of monks are put in a ſieve, which the firſt preſident ſhakes, and the Jeſuits drop through like the

the chaff from wheat, which laſt is the ſymbol of the other orders, that remain in the ſieve as wheat remains after winnowing.

Your majeſty's letter has inſpired me with ſo much courage that, perceiving nations ſo various about to open their campaigns, I am likewiſe about to open mine; and, ſince your majeſty has had the complaiſance to permit me to take the waters at Sans-Souci, I will leave my ſhell, out of which I have not crawled for theſe ten months, and will go to proclaim to the nymphs and deities, of the Havel, that they will ſoon again ſee your majeſty on its happy banks. Oh may this moment ſuffer no delay!

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXLIX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Breſlau, May 8, 1762.

YOU have furniſhed my table with the beſt of all poſſible ragouts; I there produced your engraving of the Jeſuits; each man made his remarks on the ſubject, and we have all laughed, which has not been uſual in my houſe ſince the afflictions which we have ſuffered.

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The French are pleaſant madmen: I love enemies that incite laughter; and I hate my moroſe Auſtrians, inflated with pride and impertinence, and who are good for nothing except to make men yawn, or to inſult the unfortunate.

I have no news for you at preſent but that I am in hourly expectation of my couriers. Perhaps you will think that for ſome months paſt I have been in continual expectation of couriers: the remark is true: they will however arrive at laſt, and our impatience only will have ſuffered, by delay. In this there is no harm; for we generally gain by ſubjecting our natural reſtleſſneſs to a ſhort regimen of patience, which promotes the practice of morality and the ſtudy of wiſdom. I am now aſſembling the army, and making the final regulations to the preparations for the campaign. Pray Heaven it may be fortunate, and the laſt of thoſe I ſhall ever make.

I am glad you are going to Sans-Souci; my imagination will know where to find you: I ſhall follow you into the park; I ſhall ſay, the marquis is now playing on the viol di gamba; at ſuch an hour he is commenting on the New Teſtament in Greek; I now perceive him repeating tender leſſons with Babet; in ſuch an alley he is drawing up political plans; and

while he re-viſits my apartments he remembers me.

I ſhall afterwards hold a ſhort ideal dialogue with you; but ſome intelligence of Daun will arrive, and the agreeable illuſion will vaniſh, be blown away by the wind.

My ſituation is not yet entirely free from certain overhanging clouds, which occaſionally obſcure the ſerene rays that enlighten me. This would much diſturb me, had I not been taught by experience that all the evil we fear does not befal us.

The troubles will ſoon become general over all Europe; and I imagine, after every brain ſhall have attained the height of phrenzy, reaſon will then as ſuddenly return, like people attacked by inflammatory fevers, who, after a long fit of delirium, fall into profound ſleep, and as they awake recover their ſenſes. Ah! how long does this happy moment keep us in expectation! How great are the labour-pains of Europe, before ſhe can be delivered of the ſo much deſired peace!

In peace or in war, fortunate or unfortunate, abſent or preſent, you will ever find me the ſame; that is to ſay, loving and eſteeming you as I always have done.

Adieu, my dear marquis; good night, I am going to bed.

LETTER CL.

From the King.

Undated.

I WISH, my dear marquis, I were able every day to ſend you agreeable news, but we have none of any kind at preſent, except that Sweden will immediately make peace, and that I imagine the concluſion of that with Ruſſia will arrive on the 20th. It will be about this time likewiſe that I ſhall receive news from the place in which you were with M. d'Andreſel. I have already had intelligence from the countries which were anciently governed by Mithridates, and ſuch as gives me the greateſt pleaſure; the only difference is that the good has arrived a month too late.

In deſpite of ſo many favourable appearances, you cannot imagine how many vexations aſſault me, coming from places at which I certainly did not expect to meet them. In fine, I believe myſelf predeſtined in my old age to ſee my patience exerciſed in all poſſible forms. Thy will be done, O Lord!

I ſhall become patient, marquis, and this is all I ſhall gain, which however, the balance ſtruck, will be no trifle. Daun and almoſt all the Au-

ſtrian army are coming to meet me; I ſhall have great need of aid; and, unleſs ſome good diverſion ſhould take place, I ſhall find it difficult to terminate the war.

Adieu, my good marquis; continue to love me, and be perſuaded of my eſteem.

LETTER CLI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, May 18, 1762.

I ARRIVED here yeſterday, in the delightful abode of Sans-Souci, and I have this day been informed, by a letter which has been ſent me from Berlin, that you have beaten the corps of general Beck, and taken eight battalions priſoners. You treat the Auſtrians as ill in Sileſia as prince Henry does in Saxony. This is a good commencement of the campaign; and ſhould thoſe things happen which, according to my conjecture, ought to happen, about the beginning of the next month, I have no doubt but by the end of the year you will reviſit the happy banks of the Havel, and will come to behold the ſuperb things which you have cauſed to be done at Sans-Souci, and which I unceaſingly contemplate

plate with new admiration. All here is in the beſt order poſſible. For the love of God therefore beat theſe accurſed Auſtrians as often as you can, that your ſubjects may finally have the pleaſure of ſeeing you happy and contented after ſo many vexations.

I have had the honour to ſend your majeſty the metaphyſical chimeras of D'Alembert relative to poetry and hiſtory. Is it poſſible, with ſo much underſtanding and mathematical knowledge as that man poſſeſſes, to be ſo little conſiſtent! I think our beſt writers at laſt will ſay, with father Canet, "No reaſoning, my lord; "how wiſe the maxim; no reaſoning!"

Your majeſty is now in the midſt of fatigues and dangers. How pleaſed ſhall I be to ſee you delivered from them! With reſpect to myſelf, a uſeleſs burthen on earth, my life is paſſed in wiſhing for peace, in ſtudying things but little agreeable, and in learning the meaning of words.

The Jeſuits have been baniſhed the court of France, their colleges entirely ſuppreſſed, their novices diſmiſſed, and their total exile from the kingdom is ſpoken of as a thing that muſt happen in the month of Auguſt. I am very willing to believe that the miniſtry has diſcovered ſome manœuvres of theſe worthy people, which

are unknown to the public, and on which it is determined to keep ſilence. It is certain that two days after the aſſaſſination of the king, two Jeſuits were ſent to the Baſtile, nor has it been ſince known what is become of them. Add to this when Damiens came to Paris he left the ſociety of Jeſuits at Arras. How will you act at the peace, toward theſe venomous inſects? The catholic princes afford you a fine example.

I mention all this, ſire, only to lead you to reflect on the adventure which happened to you laſt campaign. I cannot comprehend why the wretch Warkotſch has not yet been condemned and puniſhed in effigy. I am often enraged at your too great mildneſs. The wicked have need to be reſtrained by fear.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, May 24, 1762.

I HAVE the honour to anſwer your majeſty the moment after I have received your letter. Of the pleaſure which it cauſed me, I leave you to judge. We now ſee ourſelves not only actually in ſight of harbour after the fearful tempeſt,

peſt, but we ſhall ſafely ſail into this harbour in which we ſhall ſoon forget all paſt woes.

I hear from Berlin that the joy was there exceſſive; the courier arrived at ten in the evening, and the people were all night in the ſtreets, and the windows of their houſes were illuminated. Nor have we been leſs joyous at Potſdam, though we ſhould be ſtill more ſo had we the happineſs to ſee you there. I flatter myſelf the war will be ended this winter. The alliance with Ruſſia is equal to all the other alliances, with nations, circumciſed and uncircumciſed. With this ſingle aid, I regard peace as certain in leſs than four months; and, ſhould ſome people keep their promiſes, and put all in motion, it is impoſſible that you ſhould not be at Sans-Souci before the month of September.

The queen of Hungary, according to letters from Vienna, which come from good hands, has paſſed half her life lately in praying to the Virgin, and the other half in weeping. To puniſh her for the evils which her ambition has during ſeven years drawn down on mankind, I wiſh ſhe might undergo the doom of the ſiſters of Phaeton, and melt to water *.

I have the honour to be, &c.

* The ſiſters of Phaeton were changed into poplars. T.

LETTER CLIII.

From the King.

Bettlern, May 25, 1762.

I CONGRATULATE myſelf, my dear marquis, to find that Sans-Souci may become an agreeable abode to you during the fine weather of ſpring; and, did it depend only on me, every thing would already have been ſo arranged as to enable me to come and join you. The campaign, however, which is about to open, muſt be added to the ſix preceding campaigns: whether the number ſeven, which the peripatetics and monks ſuppoſe to be myſtical, muſt be accompliſhed, or that it was written in the book of fate, from all eternity, that we are not to have peace till ſeven campaigns ſhall have been completed, this we are obliged to ſubmit to.

My brother has begun well in Saxony; but I know not what tales are told concerning us; we are ſtill in cantonments; there are none but ſome parties of huſſars in the field, and neither Daun, Beck, nor any of the Auſtrians, have hitherto been liable to attack. Our campaign cannot, at the ſooneſt, begin before the 20th of June, till when do not expect to hear of any thing remarkable on our part.

I have

I have already thought of the monks of Sileſia; as ſoon as I ſhall know they have been expelled France, I have my petty project in reſerve; and I only wait to ſweep the country of Auſtrians, that I may act there as I pleaſe. You therefore comprehend, my dear marquis, that before we gather the pear we muſt ſuffer it to ripen.

How great will be the difference when we ſhall viſit Sans-Souci in its preſent condition, after having lived there before the war, and ſhall compare the ſtate of proſperity, in which we then were, with our actual poverty; and the good company that was aſſembled there with ſolitude, and the bad company which now remain! All this, my dear marquis, afflicts me, and renders me thoughtful and gloomy.

I am very much of your opinion relative to D'Alembert. It were better not to write than to publiſh paradoxes, or trifles. Blaiſe Paſcal, Newton, and this man, who were all three the greateſt mathematicians of Europe, have uttered much nonſenſe; the one in his Moral Apophthegms, the next in his Commentary on the Apocalypſe, and the preſent on Poetry and Hiſtory. It therefore does not follow that mathematics render the mind ſo perſpicuous as they are ſaid to do; though the prejudice in favour

favour of geometry has rendered this ſaying an axiom; but it is not even ſo much as a problem, remembering that the great geometricians, whom I have juſt cited, have all of them reaſoned ſo wretchedly.

Let us, my dear marquis, confine ourſelves to the pleaſing arts; perfection is not for man. We feel ſome indulgence for the miſtakes of the poet, and place them to the wanderings of his imagination; but we do not pardon the mathematician, who ought to be exact and true. For my part, feeling that man cannot always be ſo, I attach myſelf more than ever to the delights of poetry, and to every branch of ſtudy that can embelliſh and enlighten the mind. Theſe are the baubles of my old age, with which I ſhall amuſe myſelf till my lamp ſhall go out. Such ſtudies, my dear marquis, ſoften the mind, and temper the ſeverity of vengeance, the rigour of puniſhment, and, in fine, whatever is harſh in monarchical governments, with a mixture of philoſophy and indulgence, neceſſary to thoſe who govern men who are not perfect, and becauſe the governors themſelves are in the ſame ſtate.

In fine, my dear marquis, be it age, reflection, or reaſon, I regard every event of human life with much more indifference than I formerly did. When any thing is to be done for the good

good of the ſtate, I ſtill exert ſome vigour; but, between ourſelves be it ſaid, this vigour is not the impetuous fire of my youth, nor the enthuſiaſm which I formerly felt.

It is time the war ſhould end, for my homilies are ſleepy, and my auditors will ſoon laugh at me.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I wiſh to be able to ſend you agreeable news: you will ſoon receive that of the concluſion of peace with the Swedes; the other you will not have before the end of June. Continue to love me; and often recollect the warrior philoſopher who is more erratic than Don Quixote, and all the knights of the Calprenede.

LETTER CLIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE Potſdam, June 2, 1762.

IF your couriers have been waited for as long as the Meſſiah, they ſtill have produced wonderful effects. Four centuries were neceſſary for the Meſſiah and his diſciples to make a Chriſtian of a Roman emperor; you only require four months to bring an empreſs to reaſon; and it is a much greater miracle to prevail on a woman

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to hear reaſon than to baptize a prince who endeavoured to make a party among the Chriſtians, which might protect him from his enemies.

Had I not been pre-informed for ſome time, the two laſt letters which I received from your majeſty might have produced the ſame effects on me as the joy of the peace has occaſioned, in the brain of one of the principal clergymen of Berlin. The poor man became mad the very day on which *Te Deum* was ſung; and he cauſed it to be inſerted in all the gazettes, that he would preach on the morrow in verſe. Accordingly he compoſed his ſermon, and the whole city went to hear him. His brother prieſts took great offence, and ſpoke of nothing leſs than of ſuſpending the poetical preacher. Should you continue to write me intelligence equally good, you muſt not be aſtoniſhed, ſire, ſhould you receive letters to inform you that I have read a diſcourſe before the Academy of Sciences *in lingua Franca*, which is the Provençal language, as ſpoken by the Algerines. The reading of your laſt letters, actually, for more than an hour, made me ſeem like a petrified man, whom joy had rendered totally ſtupid. As your majeſty has very well ſaid, it was neceſſary to be ſenſible of the condition in which we were, ſix months ago, to have a proper conception of all the

good and the marvellous of that in which we now are.

I have had the ſatisfaction to be the firſt who celebrated your union with the emperor of Ruſſia, that brave and worthy prince, on whom may heaven heap its favours. Since I received your majeſty's letter, I have invited the burgomaſters, and ſeveral of the good citizens of Berlin, to dine with me; and I borrowed two ſmall cannon, four pounders, from the town-hall, which the citizens employ on their feſtivals; I ordered them to be drawn on the road to the foot of the colonnade of Sans-Souci, and from noon to ſeven in the evening, which was the duration of the dinner, we fired eighty times, drinking to your majeſty's health, and to that of the emperor, your good ally. Yeſterday, which was Sunday, the citizens of Potſdam made great rejoicings; I however preceded them three days.

I wiſh to be a month older, although I do not find it very pleaſant to grow old; but I feel all the delight I ſhall enjoy in the months of July, Auguſt, and September. Though I wiſh for peace with the greateſt impatience, I ſtill ſhall be vexed to ſee it concluded before you ſhall have received a good bottle of balm from the queen of Hungary, which ſhe ſhall be obliged to

beſtow

beſtow as a cure for all the wounds which ſhe has given us.

Allow me to repeat a ſhort parable.

An honeſt man was croſſing a certain foreſt: he was attacked by three thieves; they gave him ſeveral wounds, and, not ſatisfied with robbing, wiſhed to murder him. In the mean time two brave men came up, who flew to the aid of the honeſt man, and ſeized the thieves. One of the defenders of the traveller ſaid to him, "Take my advice; let us kill your enemies. If "we ſuffer them to eſcape, before the end of "your journey, you have ſtill another foreſt to "paſs, into which they may go, and again lay "wait for you." The traveller took the advice of his defenders, the thieves were exterminated, and he finiſhed his journey in ſafety.

It is not enough to have overthrown our foe; it is neceſſary to take precautions that he may not renew his attacks after having riſen.

Here do I conclude my oriental ſtyle, and have the honour to be, &c.

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LETTER CLV.

From the King.

June 8, 1762

YOU joke, my dear marquis, in your letter concerning my couriers: the misfortune is things do not proceed quite ſo faſt as I wiſh. The peace with Ruſſia is concluded, and is in reality a very advantageous event; but it has deranged my negotiation at Conſtantinople: many things are neceſſary to cover ſo many heads with one hat, or to conciliate intereſts ſo various. We negotiate, time flies, and we do not rid ourſelves of our embarraſſment. The Tartars will nevertheleſs march. They conſiſt of a hundred thouſand men; and it is to be hoped that by putting them in play the others will follow.

Your parable is admirable, but means muſt be found to put it in practice. The great difficulty is to overcome that power; the remainder would be eaſy. Speculation, my dear marquis, travels faſt, but performance ſlowly, becauſe it meets with a hundred impediments on its road. I abandon myſelf to that deſtiny which guides the world at its pleaſure. Politicians and warriors are but the puppets of Providence; the neceſſary

ceſſary inſtruments of an inviſible hand. We act without knowing what we do, and the product of our cares is often the reverſe of our hopes. I therefore ſuffer things to proceed as it ſhall pleaſe God; working in the dark, and profiting by favourable circumſtances, when they happen to preſent themſelves.

Czernichef is on the march to join us; our campaign will not begin till toward the end of the month; but there will then be a fine clamour in this poor Sileſia. In fine, my dear marquis, my wants are great and difficult; nor can we yet poſitively ſay what turn all theſe things will take.

Pray for me; and do not forget a poor devil, who is very reſtive in his harneſs, who leads the life of the damned, and who notwithſtanding eſteems and loves you ſincerely.

Adieu.

LETTER CLVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, June 17, 1762.

I AM very far from joking, concerning your couriers; the news they bring is too good to be made a joke of. Be it granted you that the Turks

Turks will not be in motion this year; ſtill the ſituation of affairs appears to me very admirable. I am not M. Euler; yet am I able to calculate that ſixty thouſand Ruſſians and twenty thouſand Swedes are eighty thouſand enemies the leſs; that twenty-five thouſand men which we employed againſt the Ruſſians, and five thouſand againſt the Swedes, make thirty thouſand; to which add twenty thouſand Ruſſians to join us, and they will form an army of fifty thouſand men which may act this year againſt the Auſtrians.

With reſpect to the Turks, I have never included them in the eſtimate, becauſe I had ſeen and read a letter, written on the 20th of April, from Conſtantinople, by an ambaſſador who was a very good Pruſſian, to another ambaſſador as good a Pruſſian as myſelf, I cannot ſay more, in which it was aſſerted that every thing was peaceable at Conſtantinople, and that the Turks would not march this year. But provided the hundred thouſand Tartars, who are on their march inſtead of the Turks, ſhould keep to their engagements, I perceive the queen will be very ill at her eaſe. I allow, had the Turks begun to move, the affair would have been over in two months; but ſhould the hundred thouſand Tartars make an irruption into Hungary, the

Auſtrians muſt at leaſt detach a corps of twenty thouſand men. As ſoon as I ſhall hear that this detachment has taken place, I ſhall judge of the certainty of the promiſe of the Tartars, and thence ſhall draw an abſolute omen in favour of peace to be concluded in the month of November or December.

If the Engliſh papers may be believed, and eſpecially the Monitor, the wiſdomof Solomon does not preſide over the councils of ſtate at London. There are very ſtrong and very energetic pieces publiſhed againſt the favourite, lord Bute. The ſpeech of Pitt to the parliament is worthy of Demoſthenes; yet with all this we ſee the duke of Newcaſtle, after having ſerved the houſe of Hanover forty-five years, and having expended five hundred thouſand pounds ſterling in its ſervice, is reduced to aſk his diſmiſſion. He has generouſly refuſed a penſion of ſix thouſand pounds ſterling, which was offered him. What would the good king your uncle ſay to all this, were he to reviſit earth, or to many other things which I dare not commit to paper, but which your majeſty will eaſily divine?

Did not the event which has happened in Ruſſia prove the little foundation of all human projects, what is now paſſing in England would be an excellent demonſtration.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLVII.

From the King.

June 19, 1762.

WERE I circumſtantially to enter with you, my dear marquis, into all which has happened in the eaſt, you perhaps would find I had reaſon to think ſome good conſequences would reſult. But affairs are not entirely deſperate; I ſtill have favourable glimmerings. The Tartar ought to be on full march, and I hope at leaſt he will afford me ſome twenty thouſand auxiliaries.

There is a rebellion among the janiſſaries at Conſtantinople; they accuſe the grand Viſir. At the departure of my letter, the eighth part of the city was in aſhes, and the conflagration ſtill continued.

Well may you ſay that all our reaſonings on futurity, all political conjecture, are but frivolity. Who can better aſſert this than I, who have, during ſix years, ſeen myſelf toſſed by all the political tempeſts of Europe, and in danger of ſhipwreck; yet hitherto preſerved, as if by miracle, notwithſtanding that I am ſtill in every kind of danger. All which has happened in Ruſſia could not have been foreſeen by count Kaunitz;

neither could what has paſſed in England, the moſt odious part of which you are ignorant of, enter at leaſt into my calculations. The reſult of all this is that he who governs kingdoms, in times of trouble and agitation, does but exerciſe the trade of a dupe. This is what perfectly diſguſts me with ſuch ungrateful and fruitleſs labours, and brings me back more than ever to the love of letters, which we may cultivate in ſilence, and in the boſom of peace. A man of letters works on ſomething certain, whereas the politician has ſcarcely any given principles.

The Ruſſians will join us on the 30th, and with their arrival our inactivity will end. I ſhall then attempt hazardous adventures, at the riſk of all conſequences. This is the ſeventh act of the tragedy. The piece is too long. The emperor of Ruſſia produces the peripetia; and I muſt labour at the denouement, that its cloſe may be as little miſchievous as poſſible. A multitude of previous arrangements at preſent occupy me. All muſt be prediſpoſed and foreſeen, before our end can be accompliſhed. Add to what I have ſaid the warmth of the negotiations which are carried on at preſent, and you will eaſily judge of the cares, the perplexities, and the labour they coſt me, as well as of

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the weight which my poor ſhoulders are obliged to bear.

In fine, my dear marquis, we approach the events by which this campaign and the whole war muſt be decided. We muſt be reſigned, and wait patiently, ſince but the leaſt part of what is yet to happen depends on ourſelves.

Adieu; live in peace, write to me often, and depend upon my friendſhip.

LETTER CLVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, June 28, 1762.

MAY I venture to aſk your majeſty what our good friends the Tartars are doing? I could wiſh they were now in Hungary.

The Danes have done that which we ought to have done. Aided by a train of artillery, they have borrowed a million of crowns from the people of Hamburg. I am vexed at this, becauſe the Danes will have the money; not to mention that the people of Hamburg are generally in the Auſtrian intereſt. I delight to ſee the imperial cities, which without reaſon are devoted to the

court of Vienna, puniſhed for their love to that ſame court, which profits by every thing.

I have no doubt but the battle which the French have juſt loſt in Germany, will increaſe the credit of Mr. Pitt in parliament, where he predicted, in the moſt confident manner, in his ſpeech, all which the prince of Brunſwick has accompliſhed.

It is generally affirmed here that you have the fineſt army in Europe now in Sileſia: may it anſwer to the hopes of the king its commander, and ſhew by its bravery it is worthy of its chief!

I return your majeſty infinite thanks for the kindneſs with which you have permitted me to remain ſix weeks at Sans-Souci. In four days I ſhall be at Berlin, that I may receive more ſpeedily the news of your majeſty's health and victories.

I have the honour to be, &c.

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LETTER CLIX.

From the King.

Bunzelwitz, July 4, 1762.

I HAVE not, my dear marquis, any of that fine paper with elegant borders which adds ſuch a grace to the letters of your countrymen, and therefore am obliged to do without it in anſwering you. Be kind enough to be ſatiſfied with a ſimple relation of what is paſſing, on ſuch paper as I have.

You will find us in the camp in which we ſo long remained laſt year. We are now about to march among the mountains, to turn marſhal Daun, and oblige him to enter Bohemia. I do not know how far we ſhall ſucceed; but there is nothing better to be done. To drive an able general from all the advantageous poſts which he has previouſly aſſumed, is a grand enterprize. Fortune will no doubt do much; but who can confide in the jilt?

You aſk me news of the Tartar; my intelligence ſays that he is now to ſend me ſome troops: the letter is dated the 11th of June. This diverſion will take place later than I hoped it would have done; but ſtill it will have its effect.

Our peace and our alliance with Ruſſia, in one reſpect admirable, have occaſioned an alteration in the good diſpoſitions in which the Orientaliſts were. Whether our enemies will profit by this remains to be known. All politics, my dear marquis, reſt on a pivot, and nothing can be depended upon with certainty, which to me is prodigious cauſe of diſguſt. The calamities of paſt years, and the ruin of moſt of the provinces, added to every kind of misfortune which has happened to me, have rendered me more a philoſopher, and more indifferent to human events, than Socrates could ever be. I ſhall ſoon attain a ſtate of perfect apathy. It is time, my dear marquis, the war ſhould end; I am no longer good for any thing; my fire is extinct, my ſtrength forſakes me, I do but vegetate. Thus circumſtanced, a man might be an ornament to the cell of a Cenobite, but is no longer fit for an intercourſe with mankind.

Prince Ferdinand has gained a conſiderable advantage over the French, of which I am very glad; but I could have wiſhed the affair had been more deciſive. Four thouſand men from eighty thouſand, and there remain ſeventy-ſix thouſand: theſe are more than enough to oppoſe prince Ferdinand, whoſe utmoſt force does

does not exceed fifty thouſand. But he is thus enabled to gain time; and ſuch a check will diſcourage a man like Soubiſe; he is among the worſt of the generals the French ever have had.

My poor margrave Charles is dead, and I am very ſenſibly afflicted; for he was one of the moſt worthy men in the world. We muſt ſoon go and join him; now or preſently, it is much the ſame thing.

Adieu, my dear marquis; write to me occaſionally, and be perſuaded of my friendſhip.

LETTER CLX.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

SIRE, Berlin, July 14, 1762.

A COLD in one eye, and rather a ſevere one, has prevented me from writing ſooner to your majeſty.

You have juſt executed, without the loſs of a man, by the fineſt manœuvres you ever made, what apparently could not have been performed without one or two battles. You are now maſter of all the mountains of Sileſia, and the Bohemian paſſes. I wiſh to ſee your army there

do all the harm to the Auſtrians which they have done to us, and finally oblige theſe madmen to put an end to a war which, for ſeven years, has laid Europe deſolate, and which Auſtrian pride and French phrenzy maintain, and foment, with ſo much fury.

It is here affirmed, as a certainty, that the emperor of Ruſſia has juſt taken the command of his army. Had my wiſhes been accompliſhed by providence, this good and worthy prince would not have marched into Germany before the general peace. The whole happineſs and tranquillity of Europe reſide in his perſon, &c. Your majeſty feels the whole force of this, &c.

I have ſeen the Ruſſian ambaſſador who is juſt arrived; he ſeems to me to be a very prudent man, greatly attached to his maſter, and entirely free from the ridiculous myſtery which is attendant on moſt politicians, and on many ambaſſadors. I am convinced your majeſty would be ſatisfied with him, ſhould he ever have the honour to ſee you.

And are we then, ſire, to have the pleaſure and the happineſs of beholding you here? Never was the Meſſiah expected with ſo much impatience; nor was his arrival ever ſo neceſſary to the Jews as yours is to the Pruſſians. But I am ſenſible, as all reaſonable people are, that

we muſt have patience; and remember that, not till you have obliged your enemies to make peace, can you quickly re-eſtabliſh all which your abſence has diſordered. Never was proverb more true, ſire, than that which ſays, When the cat is away, the mice play.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXI.

From the King.

Undated.

OUR affairs, my dear marquis, began to wear a tolerably pleaſing face, when I ſuddenly ſaw every thing deranged by one of thoſe political events that neither can be foreſeen nor prevented: the reſt you will learn.

The peace which I have concluded with Ruſſia ſtill ſubſiſts, but the alliance is puffed away. The troops are all returning to Ruſſia, and I am now reduced to my own reſources: we have however beaten two detachments of Auſtrians; but whether this will be productive of any real good remains to be proved. I ſuſpect not; and here am I again in a confined, difficult, and delicate ſituation. I am Fortune's top; ſhe whips

whips me where ſhe pleaſes. We have to-day taken a thouſand men and fourteen cannon: but this decides nothing; and every thing indeciſive does but add to my embarraſſment.

I can well believe many things of various kinds go wrong at Berlin; but what can I ſay? Fate, which guides all things, is more powerful than I am, and I can do nothing but obey. Grief is the inmate of my heart; my perplexity is exceſſive; but what can I do? Be patient. If I now write you a fooliſh letter, accuſe politics: I am ſo weary that, could I but ſee an end to this unfortunate war, I believe I ſhould renounce the world.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I embrace you.

LETTER CLXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, July 27, 1762.

WHEN I had the honour to receive your laſt letter, I had four days known the event which has happened in Ruſſia*. How

* This, and the hints in ſeveral of the foregoing letters, all relate to the conſpiracy againſt, and the aſſaſſination of, the emperor Peter III. T.

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was it poſſible that this cataſtrophe ſhould neither have been prevented nor foreſeen, when every circumſtance concurred to ſhew it was a thing to be expected? The manner of thinking of the Ruſſians who paſſed through Berlin, the diſcourſe of the Ruſſian miniſter at the Hague, and the letters that were written from Peterſburg, all predicted this melancholy event. A foreign miniſter at the court of Ruſſia, ſix weeks ago, wrote here, to a miniſter well inclined toward you, an account of all which has happened. He foretold that, if great care were not taken, events would ſoon ſpring up which have but too effectually taken place. Having ſeen the letter, I adviſed this miniſter to ſpeak to count Finck, and he accordingly informed him of all he had heard; unfortunately the information was of no effect.

If your majeſty will be pleaſed to recur to my laſt letter, you will there find that the fears which I expreſſed by half phraſes were but too well founded. God grant that thoſe which I entertain relative to the continuation of the peace may be falſe. You inform me, ſire, that all the Ruſſian troops are on their march to Ruſſia. I wiſh they may; but M. von Saldern, the envoy from Holſtein, a man devoted to your majeſty, told me yeſterday that he believed

lieved no ſuch thing. The packets that arrive from Pruſſia are all ſealed with the Ruſſian arms *; and the manifeſto which has been publiſhed by the court of Peterſburg, to retake poſſeſſion of this country, has occaſioned a general conſternation.

How, ſire, could you determine to leave Stettin in the condition of not being able to reſiſt an aſſault? Three battalions leſs in your own army, and two detached from that of prince Henry, would ſurely not have decided the fate of war, though they would have done of the principal, and even of the only town that can ſecure Berlin, and all Brandenburg.

Excuſe me, ſire, for taking the liberty to tell you what I think on this ſubject; true zeal prompts me to ſpeak. Would to God I could but ſee your majeſty tranquil and happy, and die the hour after! The ſacrifice of my life would be a trifle, for it becomes burthenſome to me; I am weary of living in a world governed by blind fortune, and inhabited by men more malignant than the moſt ferocious animals.

Prince Ferdinand has gained an advantage over the French, the news of which your ma-

* The province of Pruſſia was at that time under the power of the Ruſſians. T.

jeſty

jeſty muſt have received. My grief is ſo great that I was almoſt inſenſible to this event; nothing can affect me but the preſervation of your majeſty, and the hope that I ſhall finally ſee you ſurmount the ſtrange caprices of fortune.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXIII.

From the King.

[Undated.

YOUR apprehenſions, my dear marquis, were ill-founded; we have nothing to fear from Ruſſia, the troops of which are returning to Muſcovy. With reſpect to the revolution, it was what I dreaded; I even informed the emperor, that he might take proper meaſures. His ſecurity was too great; he was diſpleaſed when ſpoken to of precautions; and I am in poſſeſſion of a letter which he wrote to me in anſwer to the advice I gave. His misfortune originated in his determination to ſeize on a part of the property of the clergy. The prieſts concerted a revolution, which was immediately executed. This prince, though poſſeſſed of every quality of heart that could be wiſhed, had not

not an equal ſhare of prudence, of which quality much is requiſite for the government of that nation. I am this day informed he is dead of the colic.

You have every reaſon to entertain no fears for Berlin, my dear marquis; with reſpect to ourſelves, we have attempts to make which are equally difficult and perilous, but which we muſt nevertheleſs make. Pray for the aid of Fortune in our behalf, with whoſe aid every thing is effected, and without it nothing.

I am very much of your opinion concerning the vanity of all human things, and the malignity of mankind: ſuch have been my continual remarks to you; and theſe are what make me diſguſted with the world, and wiſh an end to this fatal war, that I may be able to finiſh the remainder of my life in peace.

You ſee the inſtability of human projects; you have been more forcibly ſtruck by the revolution in Ruſſia, than by any other of the accidents of which I have been a witneſs: yet, during the ſeven campaigns which I have made, I have met with nothing but baffled hopes, unexpected misfortunes, and, in fine, every caprice and ſport which chance can produce. After thus much experience, my dear marquis, a man of fifty may be allowed no lon-

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ger to wiſh to be fortune's bauble, but to renounce ambition, and all thoſe follies which do but too much delude inexperienced youth; and all thoſe prejudices which the faſhionable world feeds and perpetuates.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I embrace you.

LETTER CLXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Auguſt 9, 1762.

YOU have reſtored tranquillity to my ſoul, and my chagrin has given place to the hope of again ſeeing you happy and in peace, before I ſhall quit this planetary exiſtence, to go in ſearch of Epicurus, in ſome of the worlds which he firſt eſtabliſhed in philoſophy, and of which he was robbed by Deſcartes. This was no great crime, and I ſhould willingly overlook the pilfering, committed by celebrated mathematicians on each other, provided they would but preſerve common ſenſe, when they do not calculate.

Nothing, ſire, can be more charming than the Epiſtle which you have had the goodneſs to ſend me, by M. de Catt. How well timed is

your jocularity; and how perfectly well do you paint the exact calculator, the eternal enemy of taſte, and the deſtroyer of imagination:

Dans les cerveaux brûlés jadis la fable écloſe,
Créa tous les dieux vains de la métamorphoſe;
Improprement donna le nom de Jupiter
Aux régions des cieux occupés par l'éther;
Par Vénus déſigna la féconde nature;
Bacchus était le vin; Cérès l'agriculture.
Nouvel iconoclaſte armez-vous de rigueur;
Extirpez et ces dieux et leur aimable erreur;
Et, rejetant le ſens qu'offre l'allégorie,
Vous la remplacerez par la géométrie.
Au lieu de nous conter comment le dieu des eaux
Protégea, contre Pan, Syrinx, dans ſes roſeaux,
Philoſophe ſolide, il faudra vous rabattre
A prouver, en rimant, que deux fois deux font quatre.
*O l'excellent ſecret de plaire, et de charmer * !*

If your majeſty will pleaſe to exchange theſe

* From the heated imagination of poetry, fable of yore created all the falſe gods of Ovid. She improperly gave the name of Jupiter to the ethereal regions of the heavens; the fecundity of nature ſhe called Venus; Bacchus, wine; and agriculture, Ceres. Arm yourſelves with rigour, ye new zealots; extirpate theſe gods and their amiable errors; reject Allegory, and let Geometry be her ſubſtitute. Inſtead of reciting how the god of the waters protected Syrinx, among his reeds, from the purſuing Pan, do you, heavy philoſophers, deſcend to plain truths, and prove in rhyme that two and two are four. Oh what an excellent ſecret have you diſcovered, to pleaſe and to enchant!

fifteen

fifteen lines againſt a thick volume in duodecimo, on which I have, for this year paſt, been aſſiduouſly at work, and which I imagine I ſhall have the honour to ſend you very ſhortly, I ſhall be very well ſatisfied to give you the labour of twelve months for that of a ſingle hour, and ſhall further believe I ſhall have gained cent. per cent. by the bargain.

There is a line in your Epiſtle which muſt abſolutely be corrected—

Ne lui dépeignez point le martyr *qui vous preſſe* *.

We are obliged to read,

Ne lui dépeignez point le martyre *qui vous preſſe ;*

and then the verſe is deſtroyed †. This is the only objection I am able to make to your charming Epiſtle.

I have ſeen the promiſed wife of M. de Catt, who appears to me to be very amiable. She is very handſome, and her character is ſpoken of very advantageouſly. It is no trifling affair for a man of letters to poſſeſs a good wife. I ſhould have died ten times, or become a madman three years ago, had I not been fortunate enough to poſſeſs mine. Of women may be

* Paint not to him the martyrdom for which you are in haſte.

† By the ſyllable added. T.

ſaid that which Æſop ſaid of the tongue—there is nothing better, nor any thing worſe.

I take the liberty to ſend your majeſty one of the gazettes of Utrecht, in which there is an article concerning the ancient ſubjects of Mithridates. I ſhould be much vexed were it true, though I ſhall no more be aſtoniſhed; for, in this caſe, the affair, of which your majeſty did me the favour to ſpeak, has not yet taken place *. It is affirmed your majeſty is beſieging Schweidnitz; when you have taken it, ſend us poſtillions, that our good people of Berlin may rejoice; and do not do as you did the laſt time you recovered the fortreſs, when you did not deign to ſend us a ſimple meſſenger. We have ſuffered ſo many vexations, that it is but juſt we ſhould enjoy a little pleaſure.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXV.

From the King.

Undated.

YOUR letter, my dear marquis, found me in labour. I am to be delivered of Schweid-

* The irruption of the Tartars. T.

nitz.

nitz. I am obliged to cover it, on all ſides, againſt this Daun, who orders a dozen of his delegates to hover round, and render our enterprize abortive. He thus obliges me to be perpetually attentive to the motions of the enemy, and to ſuch intelligence as I endeavour to procure. Hence you may imagine my poor brain is not very poetical.

The line you complain of ſhall be corrected: it is a trifle; but I aſk time, till our ſiege ſhall be concluded, which thus far goes on very well. I proteſt I have no vanity; and I attribute ſo much to chance, and to the troops, in the ſucceſs of my enterprizes, that I am not ſeized with the mania of poſtillions. However, if ſome you muſt have, to inſpire you with joy, have them you undoubtedly ſhall.

The gazette writers have lied, according to their noble cuſtom. The news you have heard has been inſerted in the public papers by the court of Warſaw, to pacify the nation concerning the march of the Khan of the Tartars, who is ſkirting their frontiers. I ſhall at this time ſay nothing to you of the Pontus, nor of the Empire of the Eaſt. I am ſo weary of predicting that I will write nothing but fact, in future. Have a little patience; my whole attention is employed in the operation I have begun, which

I aſſure you would afford ufficient employment for a youth. What a life muſt it therefore be for an old man, worn and broken as I am; whoſe memory decays, and who perceives his ſenſes and force of mind to be periſhing! There is a time for all things, in the life of man; and, at my age, my dear marquis, books, converſation, an eaſy chair, and a cheerful fire, are all that remain. They will very ſoon be ſucceeded by a coffin.

Adieu, my dear marquis; live happily and peaceably, and do not forget me.

LETTER CLXVI.

From the King.

Peterſwalde, Auguſt 13, 1762.

THE conjectural art, my dear marquis, is confined, and ſo ſhall be as long as the world ſhall endure. To determine gallantly, and to ſuffer things to take their own turn, is no doubt the only wiſe mode in which we now can act. You will at preſent allow the truth of what I ſaid, when I refuted the apprehenſions which had been credited, from popular report. We have been ſo long in the ſchool of adverſity,

adverſity, that the public is credulous in behalf of misfortunes which fear predicts; yet all the good, or all the ill, that is dreaded, but ſeldom comes to paſs.

To reſtore your comfort, I inform you that my attempt on Schweidnitz hitherto proceeds exceedingly well; eleven fortunate days more, and our hopes will be accompliſhed. I ſhall ſend you much more good news: I expect your credulity ſhould turn to the ſide of fortunate events, that I may announce them. I ſhall therefore wait till you write to me, that I may ſerve you according to your wiſhes.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I am fatigued, and my age renders exerciſe more ſevere than it formerly was. Write to me, and do not doubt of my friendſhip.

LETTER CLXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Auguſt 19, 1762.

I AM in haſte to have the honour of complimenting your majeſty, on the very conſiderable and very effective advantage, which you have juſt gained, over generals Laſcy, Beck,

and O'Donnel. I hope this will ſoon haſten the arrival of the poſtillions, with whom you will have the complaiſance to regale our good people of Berlin. Should the taking of Schweidnitz procure us peace, at the end of the campaign, or during the courſe of the winter, it will be equal to the taking of a kingdom. Is it not time, after a dreadful ſeven years war, that peace ſhould repair ſo many evils, and that the barbarous fury of your enemies ſhould ceaſe, and not make any more uſeleſs efforts, which do but maintain horrid confuſion, and moſt cruel diſorder throughout Europe?

There is much talk of peace between France and England: if this peace ſhould be productive of a peace between all the belligerent powers, I wiſh for its arrival; but, if it be followed by no ſuch effect, I cannot ſee any great utility that it will be of to us, eſpecially ſhould it take place according to the inſinuations of the public papers. Your majeſty ought to know, better than any one, all that paſſes on this ſubject; therefore, as I perceive you are ſatisfied, I am undiſturbed by all the reports that are circulated.

Whenever your majeſty ſpeaks of your pretended old-age, I immediately run to my almanac, and perceive I am nine years older

than your are, having, within this month, entered my ſixtieth year: I then ſoftly ſhut my book, without ſaying a word; but reſt much confuſed that a man who is ten years younger than myſelf ſhould complain of his old age. Should you ever return in peace to Sans-Souci, you will become ten years younger, and I fifteen; after which, in joy and tranquillity, you will live as long as Abraham, and I as Jacob, and Sans-Souci will be to us Arabia the Happy.

We wait here with impatience, for a farther account of the late advantage which you have gained, and of which we have only heard in the groſs; though the news ſpread univerſal joy through Berlin. May we ſoon have the pleaſure to ſee you arrive there contented, and in poſſeſſion of perfect health.

I have the honour to be, &c.

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LETTER CLXVIII.

From the King.

Peterſwalde, Aug. 19, 1762,
after the affair of Reichenbach.

MY verſes have explained my thoughts, relative to the poſtillions, whom you have ſeen arrive at Berlin. It is good to rejoice at having eſcaped a great misfortune: we are, however, my dear marquis, far from having completed our deſigns; and, to ſpeak frankly to you, I imagine we ſhall have another criſis *, before the capture of Schweidnitz. Whatever ſhall pleaſe chance, deſtiny, or providence, that ſhall come to paſs; for certainly all three, or one of the number, have or has a greater part in the accidents of the world than the foreſight of man. I leave you to make your own philoſophic reflections, on this dark and impenetrable ſubject. Should you happen on any lucky diſcovery, you will by communication give me pleaſure.

In the mean time, let me entreat you, my dear marquis, not to forget me.

* By *criſis* the king means *battle*. T.

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LETTER CLXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, September 2, 1762.

I HOPE that, at the time when your majeſty ſhall receive the letter I have the honour to write, Schweidnitz will be taken. You have had the bounty, ſire, to promiſe us poſtillions; and in return I ſend your majeſty a ſmall packet, with which I hope you will be ſatisfied. It contains two copies of the new edition of the *Poeſies Diverſes*, in a very convenient pocket ſize. Nothing can be more elegant than this edition, nor could a better be printed at London or Paris. Half of this edition departs today for Dantzic: nine hundred copies have been demanded by the Ruſſian officers. You have the art of gaining the affections of people who have been your greateſt enemies.

M. de Beauſobre has ſuperintended the new edition of the *Poeſies Diverſes*; and has acquitted himſelf with all poſſible zeal. He is a very worthy man, and will meet with ſome eſtabliſhment * at the peace, ſhould you think proper to give him a place, when you ſhall be more calm, and freed from all perplexity. Your glory is

* Some wife with a fortune. T.

immortal,

immortal, but you are too good a philoſopher to imagine your body to be the ſame. Should this young man hereafter have the misfortune to loſe you, what muſt become of him? Could he marry a woman with a certain portion, he would then be in no dread of want; but, to find ſuch a wife, a place were neceſſary; and, to find a place, we muſt wait the return of peace. God grant it us, for we have great need of it; yet I think, with your majeſty, it is neceſſary that it ſhould be good, honourable, and permanent: I would rather otherwiſe ſuffer during ten additional years, if ſo it muſt be; and all good citizens ought to think, and do think, the ſame.

The Engliſh have taken the Havannah, with many millions, and ſeveral ſhips of war. Were not the Spaniards poſſeſſed by Satan, that they ſhould declare war only to be cruſhed, and to render the obtaining of peace more difficult?

Your majeſty may judge of our preſent inquietude, and of the impatience with which we wait to hear the fate of Schweidnitz. To-day is the ſecond of September; I cannot think the beſieged will hold out much longer, if they have not already capitulated.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXX.

From the King.

Peterſwalde, September 6, 1762.

YOU are, paſt contradiction, the moſt gallant of marquiſſes, to ſend me books ſo fine, and ſo well bound and gilt; nothing is wanting, my dear D'Argens, except the lining, which is very ſlight, and unworthy of the outſide. I thank you however for the kindneſs with which you have thought of me. I congratulate the bookſeller that he has been able to ſell his edition in Ruſſia, for this probably is the only country in which I may paſs for a good French poet.

You thought perhaps you were ſending me a reward, for my ſiege of Schweidnitz: but you have been deceived, my good marquis; I am as aukward in taking fortreſſes as in writing verſe. One Griboval, who has more wit in his head than Hercules had in both his ſhoulders *, he and ten thouſand Auſtrians have hitherto ſtopped us: however I muſt tell you the governor and his garriſon are in the pangs of death. We ſhall immediately adminiſter the

* The French proverb is, *Qui ne ſe mouche pas du pied*—that is, Who does not blow his noſe with his foot. T.

viaticum

viaticum. We are at the palliſadoes; and a mine, which will be blown in four days, will open the counterſcarp, which will put an end to this difficult operation. Theſe gentry know we wiſh to take them priſoners of war, and for that reaſon endeavour to wait the laſt moment. I cannot but own they are right.

To my great edification, I have ſeen that M. de Beauſobre thinks of propagating his illuſtrious race, according to the command of God given to our firſt parents—*Be fruitful and multiply*. I patiently wait the peace, and that confidence which he ſhall pleaſe to put in me, relative to his paſſion and his projects; and am reſigned to all which chance ſhall command, reſpecting him and ourſelves.

This peace, my dear marquis, appears to me a thing of certainty; though the *how* is a more obſcure enigma than that which the Sphinx propoſed to the Thebans. The preſent politics of Europe form a labyrinth in which we loſe ourſelves. I can find my way for a few ſteps, after which I am diſcouraged, and recommend myſelf to St. Chance, the patron of the mad and the thoughtleſs.

If it be true that the Engliſh have taken the Havannah, they will make a ſeparate peace with France and Spain; there it will end; and

with reſpect to us, we muſt war on with our obſtinate queen till her purſe ſhall be emptied, and ſhe will then become the moſt pacific princeſs in Europe. Such, my dear marquis, are great princes: while hypocritically pretending to peace, they are devoured by ambition. The queen, however, has diſcovered her character, during the courſe of this war; and I do not believe her word will be taken, ſhould ſhe endeavour to throw duſt in the eyes of the public.

I think little Beauſobre acts with more ſenſe; he wiſhes to re-people that world which this war has almoſt depopulated: and I hold it very wiſe in a man of letters to think of multiplication; for it is better to beget a child than a bad book: for my part, I ſhall beget neither.

I am preparing poſtillions, which I flatter myſelf I ſhall ſoon ſend off to announce the happy event, which now to me appears certain. New difficulties will preſent themſelves; but do not let us think of them at this moment: let us conquer them in their turn, without being too anxious concerning the future. This is philoſophy, my dear marquis. You perceive the progreſs I make; and certainly any man but myſelf, who had for ſeven campaigns been the ſport of chance, and the opprobrium of preponderating powers, would have become a Marcus Aurelius. This is philoſophy

ſophy *per force*; but ſtill philoſophy will ever be good, in whatever manner it may be obtained.

Adieu, my dear, my divine marquis. Be ſatisfied; and calmly wait the mandates of that ſomething, which laughs at the projects of man, and regulates all things in a manner unexpected.

My compliments to the good Babet.

LETTER CLXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, September 21, 1762.

I SHOULD have done myſelf the honour to have anſwered the letter your majeſty did me the favour to write to me ſeveral days ſince, but that I have been ill for a fortnight. I have indeed felt myſelf incommoded for above ſix weeks. A moſt violent vomiting, from the efforts of nature, without the aid of phyſic, has relieved me. My diſeaſe was twice-digeſted bile, which remained in the body, and was the cauſe of very painful ſpaſms. I may very juſtly call my malady the malady of the revolution of Ruſſia.

It

It is very ſurpriſing that, having ſupported with tolerable fortitude all the afflicting accidents which have happened to us during the war, my philoſophy failed when I firſt heard the news of this revolution. In fine, affairs have taken a fortunate turn, and we muſt think no more of the matter.

My preſent fears relate to Schweidnitz; nor can I perſuade myſelf it will not be taken, before your majeſty will receive my letter. Well may your majeſty ſay, that M. de Griboval has more wit in his head than Hercules had in both his ſhoulders. How has that man been able, for the ſpace of two months, to defend a fortreſs which was taken from us in two hours?—My phyſician has commanded me, from morning to night, never once to be angry; but where is the angel from heaven, who ſhould remember the manner in which you have been ſerved on ſome occaſions, during this war, that would not ſwear louder than Beelzebub and his whole infernal crew? I ſee many ſovereigns eating, drinking, ſleeping, and doing nothing more, who are ſerved with the utmoſt zeal; while you, battling, enduring heat and cold, partaking all the fatigues of your ſoldiers, and faring no better than them, during the whole campaign, are obliged to employ your whole

time in repairing the faults committed by perſons whom you have loaded with favours. I will ſay no more on the ſubject; for I wiſh not to be in a fever again, and I cannot think of it in cold blood.

Your majeſty is too kind, and does me too much honour, by your remembrance of my wife. I have been under obligations to her on various occaſions for having recalled me to reaſon. She has effected more than all my philoſophy, which would often have been fruitleſs, had not the advice of friendſhip given it additional force.

I ſhall be much obliged to you, if you will pleaſe to allow me to go and drink ſome dozen bottles of the ſpa water of Sans-Souci. I am ordered to take a little exerciſe, and by the aid of theſe waters, if poſſible, to impart a ſmall degree of ſtrength to my ſtomach and inteſtines. The beſt reſtorative, I believe, after that of knowing your majeſty to be in good health, will be the news of the taking of Schweidnitz. For this I wait with the utmoſt impatience, and flatter myſelf this curſed governor muſt be obliged at length to capitulate, even though he ſhould have St. John Nepomuzene, and all the Auſtrian ſaints, by his ſide in this fortreſs. Troy was taken in deſpite of Neptune and Apollo;

and

and are not the gods of Homer of more worth than gods created by popes?

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXII.

From the King.

Bægendorf, September 26, 1762.

I AM many excuſes in your debt, my dear marquis, for having too preſumptuouſly foretold an end to our ſiege by the twelfth of this month. We are here ſtill, and have met with many impediments from mines. We are at preſent maſters of the covered way; and, as the greateſt obſtacle is removed, I flatter myſelf the remainder will proceed with more haſte. We are obliged to employ ſix weeks in the recovery of a place which we loſt in two hours; which is no eulogium either on our abilities or our courage.

I am here myſelf, that I may haſten, as much as poſſible, our labours and our enterprize. I will propheſy no more, nor announce the day of reduction; but I think it may be ſtill at ſome days diſtance. The genius of Griboval defends the place better than the valour of the Au-

ſtrians. He is continually inventing artifices of every kind. In fine, my dear marquis, I am obliged to act both as engineer and miner. Succeed, however, we muſt at laſt. We are at preſent making a mine to blow up the envelope; I wait for the effect; after which we ſhall make an aſſault on the fortreſs, and probably the governor will be obliged to capitulate.

This path being ſmoothed, there are many others yet to traverſe before the arrival of peace. But let us not think; rather let us ſurmount our ſucceſſive difficulties. Let us recollect what we have to do to-day, and we will examine to-morrow what meaſures different circumſtances may require us to take.

Such, my dear marquis, is our preſent ſituation. Be kind enough to ſupport our ill addreſs and ignorance with patience; in the mean time your chickens will thrive and grow fat: that which is waited for gives more pleaſure than that which is eaſily obtained.

This is all the news I have to tell you, for nothing is more old or more durable than the friendſhip I have for you.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER CLXXIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, Bægendorf, September 27, 1762.

I WISH I could tell you that Schweidnitz were taken, but ſo it is not; the tricks of mines have four weeks impeded us. We are now at the paliſadoes. The enemy yeſterday ſprung a mine, which deſtroyed one of our lodgments; and the whole day was employed in its repair. In fine, we muſt have patience; for this Griboval defends the town as he ought.

The garriſon, at the beginning of the ſiege, conſiſted of eleven thouſand men; Zaſtrow had only three thouſand. He is not by this wholly diſculpated; though it is very certain that three are little more than the fourth of eleven, and that theſe people are much better able to defend themſelves than he was.

The revolution in Ruſſia gave you the colic; the reaſon of which was, that all which affects me very much affects you. If poſſible, however, teſtify your friendſhip without loſing your health. Drink the waters at Sans-Souci; I hope they will do you good. For my own part, I am ſo

accuſtomed to adverſe accidents, and am ſo indifferent to all the events of this world, that thoſe things which, formerly, would have made the deepeſt impreſſions, now, glide lightly over my mind. I can aſſure you, my dear marquis, I have really made ſome progreſs in practical philoſophy. I am becoming old, I approach the end of life; and my ſoul inſenſibly detaches itſelf from the idea of a world which paſſes away, and of which I ſhall ſoon take my leave. The ſituation of laſt winter, the revolution in Ruſſia, and the perfidy of the Engliſh, are ſubjects, on which if we do but reflect, that well may render us reaſonable. And who would during his whole life keep the worſt of company, in this worſt of poſſible worlds? I only cite a few cauſes of diſguſt; but I have had ſo many during the war, that my ſenſibility of ſoul is quite exhauſted, and a calloſity of unfeeling indifference is formed, which has rendered me ſcarcely good for any thing.

We have neither Neptune nor Apollo to oppoſe us, but one Griboval, and eight thouſand men ſtill, with miners who give good exerciſe to our patience. There is no beauteous Helena in Schweidnitz; but we are in want of an Achilles, whom I ſhould prefer to St. Nepomuzene, St. Dennis, or St. Nicholas, could I find him.

him. We nevertheleſs puſh forward with our works as faſt as we prudently can; and, if I can judge, I do not believe that from the beginning of the ſiege there have been ſix loſt days. Where is the ſiege in which there are not as many? At leaſt we do not waſte our time in haranguing, like your talkative Greeks; nor in going to prayers, like your cruſaders before Jeruſalem and Damietta.

Schweidnitz will be taken; I am not diſturbed on that ſubject; but there will remain another arduous taſk, over which I perceive an impenetrable fog, which prevents me from diſcovering objects and future contingencies. St. Hedwige, though my heavenly relation, affords me very little light or aid. I therefore abandon futurity to fate, and in the mean time continue to vegetate. My pen flows freely with my thoughts; perhaps I weary you: recollect however there is a pleaſure in unburthening the heart, and pay ſome reſpect to my preſent ſituation.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I ſhall ſay no more at preſent, but conclude with aſſuring you of my entire friendſhip.

LETTER CLXXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 5, 1762.

I BEGIN by thanking your majeſty for the favour you have done me, in permitting me to go to Sans-Souci; but the bad weather which we have had for ſome days, and my languid ſtate of health, keep me at Berlin in my own deſpite.

I recover courage, ſince your majeſty aſſures me you ſhall take Schweidnitz, and that you are not diſturbed on that ſubject. You require an Achilles; are not you yourſelf an Achilles? You do not want a hero, but an engineer equal to this Griboval whom your majeſty praiſes with ſo much impartiality. The art of fortification, ſo eſſential a branch of the art of war, and ſo much cultivated in France, has unfortunately been neglected in Pruſſia. The late king held it in no eſteem. You were too enlightened not to perceive its uſe; but there are ſome abuſes which require much time to correct. The ſiege of Schweidnitz is a proof that an able engineer is ſometimes more eſſential, and more requiſite, than ten general officers. Vauban alone,

by

by the places which he had ſo well fortified, was the ſaviour of France in the war of the ſucceſſion. The allies gained a battle, and loſt the remainder of the campaign in taking a town, by which they advanced two leagues.

I am in expectation of all that can happen on the part of the Engliſh miniſtry. As ſoon as Pitt went out of office, I foreſaw every thing, and had the honour to write to your majeſty, and to communicate my fears. I have ſtill however ſome hope that a peace ſo ſhameful to the Engliſh, in which they will at once fail in their duty to their allies and to themſelves, will not take place. The majority of the nation is highly incenſed to perceive conqueſts which have coſt ſo much blood given up without any reaſon; and the good faith of England loſt to all the princes who might be induced to become her allies. After the example of the peace of Utrecht, and of the preſent, ſhould it be concluded, who will ever confide in the Engliſh?

In fine, happen what will, let us recover Schweidnitz, and we ſhall afterward ſee what turn things will take. The eyes of all Europe are fixed on this ſiege, and its fortunate or unfortunate cataſtrophe may give a very different face to affairs. I have no doubt but that it will be as we could wiſh, and that this difficult enter-

prize will be ended before the bad weather ſets in.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 14, 1762.

THE poſtillions are at length arrived; the pleaſure with which they were received may well be imagined. At the firſt ſound of their horns, my pullet and turkey were maſſacred, and will be eaten this evening, while we drink huge bumpers to the health of your majeſty. I had alſo in reſerve a ham dreſſed for the ſame feaſt, which will be a great ornament to the table, when ſurrounded by our principal academicians, who are excellent citizens, and who love your glory and immortal memory more than that of all paſt, preſent, and future philoſophers.

You have rejoiced us all; though I fear I ſhall weary you by ſending you a new work which I have written. I have endeavoured, however, with all my might, to render it as lit-

tle

the defective as I could, and have been aſſiduouſly at work at it for a whole year.

Your majeſty will eaſily diſcover in it the different tempers of my mind. I have written Diſſertations on the three firſt chapters during our times of trouble, and on the fourth and the beginning of the fifth while Peter III. was on the throne: thoſe at the concluſion were written after the revolution.

My intention has been for ever to root up ſuperſtition, on which the name of religion is beſtowed. My Diſſertations are—On hermaphrodites, and women lovers of their own ſex—On the pretenſions of the Rabbins, that Adam was a hermaphrodite, and that God created him two wives—On the hiſtory of theſe two wives—On French and Italian muſic—On epic poetry—On Cicero—Voltaire amply criticiſed on all theſe ſubjects—Reflections on this pretended philoſophic age.

All theſe latter Diſſertations were compoſed during our alliance with Peter III. The following are thoſe which ſucceeded his death—That the great evils which have afflicted the earth for the ſpace of two thouſand years have been occaſioned by prieſts—That they aſſaſſinated kings and emperors—That the fathers of the church were the firſt promoters of the doctrine,

trine, that ſubjects are allowed to revolt, and to kill their princes—That they corrupted hiſtory —That Conſtantine and Clovis, the two firſt chriſtian princes, were more wicked than Nero and Caligula—That the emperor Julian was the model of good princes, and has been falſely aſperſed by all the fathers of the church.

After having read this table of contents, your majeſty will no doubt aſk me, how I was bold enough to write truth ſo freely; but, when you have read my work, you will allow that I have managed the ſubjects in ſuch a manner as not to be liable to attack from the moſt outrageous bigot; I venture to affirm that the manner, in which I have attacked ſuperſtition, is new and judicious. The idea of my plan is perhaps the only paſſable thing in my whole work. Would to heaven there were but the fourth part of the wit in it, which there is in your charming lines on Schweidnitz!

Now that Schweidnitz has ſurrendered, I ſhall take the liberty to recal to your mind the trifling agreement which you had the goodneſs to make with me, but which never could be carried into execution, becauſe of the oppoſition of the Auſtrians, whom with all my heart I bequeath to Beelzebub. There were a certain pair of landſcapes, by M. Harper, which had been

been promiſed me by Frederic the Great, ſhould I continue three weeks without being ill. I had already been a fortnight in full enjoyment of Herculean health; and behold, on the 3d, Frederic departed from Potſdam to go into Saxony, and to change the epithet Great into that of Moſt Great; and I ſaw my landſcapes, which I had more than half won, vaniſh in ſmoke, like the projects of the Saxons. Now then that you have taken Schweidnitz, and which, according to me, is not one of the moſt trifling things you have done, you ought in conſcience to pay me for my fortnight's health, and give orders, in your firſt letter, to have the pair of landſcapes taken from the floor, where they remain, and make but a ſorry figure; where as I ſhould hang them up, framed, in my chamber. They would rejoice my mind in ſplenetic moments; and I ſhould ſay to all who might come to viſit me, Look! here are two pictures given me by his majeſty. A week is ſtill remaining, before they can be totally and legally mine; but the king does not act like thoſe vile Auſtrians, who, whenever they have the power, infringe capitulations; he has, with his own hand, written in his laſt letter, *granted*; yet he might without forfeiting his word have written *refuſed*.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October, 1762; after having ſent his majeſty the Timœus of Locris.

YOUR majeſty has too much complaiſance in approving the feeble work which I had the honour to ſend you. If any thing can merit ſome trifling indulgence in its favour, it was the intention with which it was written. You muſt have perceived, while running it over, that fanaticiſm, on which blind men have beſtowed the name of religion, is there continually attacked either directly or indirectly. This may cauſe my book to be read with ſome pleaſure, by reaſonable people; but, in other reſpects, what is a work of erudition when compared to a work of wit and imagination? It is a heavy and tardy camel marching by the ſide of a Spaniſh gennet. One of your Epiſtles contains more thoughts, and more ingenious ſtrokes, than three folio volumes by Scaliger; the former I compare to a necklace, which in its ſmall circumference contains the worth of a million in diamonds; and the latter to a huge coffer, in which packs of cloth, linen, woollen, and other

kinds of merchandiſe, are heaped in diſorder; and, though the contents of this coffer may be good, its worth is trifling when compared to that of the necklace.

Permit me to return your majeſty thanks for the two landſcapes, which you have done me the favour to grant with ſo much bounty. They are what you formerly cauſed to be painted by the ſon of Harper, when he was in want of ſome money to go to Rome. You have never thought proper to hang them up, and they were ſtanding in the chamber next to that which prince Ferdinand of Brunſwic occupied. It was really your intention to have given them me, as I had the honour to inform you. They make a ſplendid appearance in my cabinet, though they certainly were too indifferent for any one of your apartments, otherwiſe I never ſhould have recalled to your mind the jocular taſk you inflicted upon me, previous to my being put in poſſeſſion of them.

Your majeſty ought not to doubt of the pleaſure I ſhall feel to meet you once more, for this of all things is what I moſt deſire; therefore, however feeble my wretched health may be, having almoſt continual diarrheas, which render me extremely weak, and from which I have not been entirely relieved by all the art of medicine,

medicine, I think, were it required of me to make a journey of eighteen or twenty miles, which I might be able to perform in four days, I ſhould have ſtrength enough for the undertaking. But if it be neceſſary to go as far as Breſlau, which I could not do in leſs than nine or ten days, debilitated as I now am, I much fear the ſame would again happen to me as did happen during my laſt journey, and that I ſhould fruitleſsly undertake more than I could perform; which would occaſion me great perplexity, if I ſhould happen to be taken ill at ſome place equidiſtant from Berlin and Breſlau. In my preſent condition, a journey of twenty-four leagues, in the midſt of winter, is of exceſſive length.

I am far, ſire, from having forgotten the tranſlation of Plutarch. I have already written a fourth of it; but this work will form a huge volume in folio, which cannot be accompliſhed in a day. You will no doubt aſk me, why did I tranſlate other works firſt? Sire, the two works that I have tranſlated are not together equal to twenty pages of Plutarch, and have coſt me but little time. With reſpect to the added Diſſertations, I was induced to write them by two reaſons. I compoſed thoſe on Ocellus indirectly in anſwer to numerous libels, which were

were publiſhed in Germany and France againſt philoſophers; and that with an intent to find an opportunity of attacking the philoſopher of Sans-Souci, and all thoſe whom he honours with his bounty.

I wrote the Diſſertations on Timœus of Locris to diſcharge on this moſt deteſtable of poſſible worlds a part of the bile which our enemies had excited in me, and to laſh the herd of prieſts, who rejoiced in our misfortunes. This was the ſole conſolation I found in theſe perilous times. I committed my griefs to paper, and found ſome relief. My mind was too much abſorbed by thoughts on our ſituation to be totally occupied by the thoughts of another man, which however is what a tranſlator is obliged to be.

In theſe leſs tempeſtuous times I ſhall return to my tranſlation of Plutarch. I ſhall print two volumes annually, and in three years the work will be completed. God knows whether I ſhall live long enough to finiſh it; but, if not, ſome one will be found after me to tranſlate what I have left; and the bookſeller, having printed the firſt volumes, will, for his own intereſt, be obliged to print the latter. There are ſome very fine diſſertations in Plutarch, but there are others that are very feeble. I act like

thoſe generals who do not imagine they ſhall remain long in the country, and therefore ſeize on the beſt they can find. I ſhall inſert what I think the beſt in the firſt volumes, and ſhall leave the remainder for the laſt. Should I not have ſtrength to conclude the work, I will publiſh what I ſhall have finiſhed as a tranſlation of the fineſt eſſays in Plutarch.

Your majeſty muſt have felt ſome vexation lately at what has paſſed in Saxony; but after the conſiderable ſuccour which you have ſent thither ſhall arrive, the face of affairs will preſently be changed. It is ſingular enough that the Auſtrians, having formed the project of attacking prince Henry, and of profiting by the great ſuperiority they had over him, ſhould wait till you had firſt taken Schweidnitz, and till the ſnows on the mountains of Sileſia ſhould render a part of your troops uſeleſs there. The action, of which they talk loudly, might have been injurious to us, had it taken place a fortnight before the ſurrender of Schweidnitz, but will be of no real utility to them now; ſince their loſs has been greater than ours.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October 31, 1762.

I WAS preparing to write to your majeſty, and thank you for the bounty which you did me the honour to teſtify toward me in your laſt letter, when I heard of the ſplendid victory gained by prince Henry, the worthy brother of Frederic the Great, over your enemies. Permit me, ſire, on this occaſion, to preſent the moſt ſincere and the moſt pleaſing congratulations, which I hope will ſoon be ſucceeded by others, on the ſurrender of Dreſden. Without any great pretenſions to calculation, I perceive a decreaſe of twenty thouſand Auſtrians in leſs than a fortnight. Ten thouſand taken at Schweidnitz, ſix thouſand in the battle which prince Henry has lately won, and four thouſand left killed or wounded on the field. I imagine you will be ſatisfied with your campaign; Fortune no longer is a goddeſs enſlaved by the caprice of the Auſtrians; ſhe has freed herſelf from the yoke to which they appeared to have ſubjected her. What will Bute and all

his clan ſay, after having wiſhed in ſo cowardly a manner, to abandon us?

I ſhould add many more things to your majeſty; but my cook has this moment entered, to enquire whether I ſhall not make a little feaſt this evening, and what I will have for ſupper; having, the moment I heard the poſtillions horns, ſent to invite ſome of our academicians to come, philoſophically, and celebrate the glory of prince Henry, and the Pruſſian arms. We ſhall not crown ourſelves with roſes, becauſe there are none at this time of the year; we ſhall drink no Falernian wine, becauſe our wine-merchants do not keep it; but we ſhall empty a full bottle of excellent pontac, which will be drunken, wiſhing your majeſty, as well as prince Henry, all proſperity and happineſs; for, with reſpect to fame, you have both of you more than enough, and any increaſe would but be pouring water into the ſea.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, October, 1762.

NOTHING can be more natural or witty than the laſt poetry which your majeſty did me the honour to ſend me. We are ready to ſay, that the ſhades of Chaulieu and La Fare are fled from the Elyſian fields jointly to dictate to you. Might we be allowed to ſcold kings, I ſhould moſt heartily and loudly ſcold your majeſty, for ſpeaking with ſo much indifference on a charming production, which Voltaire would include among the beſt of his fugitive poetry. I doubt whether he be able at preſent to depict, with equal force and truth, that indignation which we feel, while we read the hiſtory of the crimes and impoſitions of the pretended miniſters of religion, by them committed age after age, and which in the preſent century they have endeavoured to augment.

I much fear, when you have ſucceſſively read my Diſſertations on Timœus, you will loſe the little good opinion which you had conceived of the work; but I hope you will pardon me in favour of my good will, and will forgive the work,

remembering the intention of the author. I had more than one deſign in writing my book, as you will eaſily perceive; but the two principal were, to root out ſuperſtition; and, in the perſon of the virtuous Julian, to avenge the numerous kings and great men, who have been indignantly treated by thoſe to whom Imbecillity has given the name of *the fathers*, and who were really worthy of being the fathers of the idiots by whom they were thus called. I afterward thought it my duty to ſhew the abſurdity of that Platonic philoſophy, on which certain Chriſtian dogmas have been engrafted, which faithleſs tyrants, like Conſtantine and Clovis, have artfully employed to accompliſh their deſigns, and to form a party ſuch as might favour their unjuſt power. I hope I have proved all theſe facts evidently, according to the confeſſion of the moſt bigoted hiſtorians; and this, if I do not deceive myſelf, is to attack error in its laſt retreat.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 10, 1762.

IN my ſmall judgment, the beſt mode is to make politics and war march with equal pace; to continue to beat your enemies, and lead them as briſk a dance as you have done during this campaign.

A report is circulated at this moment, as a certain fact, that preliminaries have been ſigned between France, England, and Spain; it is even aſſerted that the courier who brings your majeſty this intelligence has paſſed through Rotterdam, on the 5th of this month. If this be true, however culpable the conduct of Bute may be, it does not ſurpriſe me; for I foreſaw it when Pitt quitted the adminiſtration. What conſoles me is that, the chance of war being ſo uncertain, prince Ferdinand, after many victories, might have loſt a battle; and in this caſe we ſhould have ſeen the French at Halberſtadt, and along the Elbe, and ſhould have been in the utmoſt perplexity. Should the French return home, though they were to deliver up Weſel to the Auſtrians, there will be a bramble the leſs

in our road. I have no fear of the Auſtrians ſingly; and the ſucceſs of your campaign is a proof that my opinion is founded on experience.

Your majeſty aſks me how it happens that I have a continued laxity, and why my bowels are ſo weak; and I anſwer, the cauſe of this was the taking of Schweidnitz in two hours, the ſurrender of Colberg, and the unfortunate end of Peter III. At each of theſe events I had an illneſs enough to have killed a horſe; judge what muſt have been their effects on a body ſo weak as mine. I am now, ſire, fifty-nine. I was born on the twenty-fourth of June, in the fourth year of this century; and when you call yourſelf old what am I to think?

I have no doubt, however, ſire, but I may undertake a journey to Leipſic, and even without danger; for I have been ſeriouſly aſſiduous for ſome time to recover my health; and, though you treat me as a glutton, I live with as much abſtinence as a capuchin during his noviciate. With this regimen, and ſome ſtrengthening remedies, my phyſician has given me his word that I ſhall be well before the firſt of December, which is the day which your majeſty has, in your letter, appointed for my departure. I have made my arrangements accordingly.

M. de

M. de Catt was married yeſterday; he had the good ſenſe to have the marriage performed without ceremony, and invited none but the neareſt relations. There is but one univerſal opinion, concerning his wife, of whom every perſon relates a thouſand good acts; and I believe her huſband will be truly happy. In general I believe there is nothing ſo bad as wives; but he who is fortunate enough to have a good wife enjoys what a private perſon ought to think a great bleſſing, be he as much of a philoſopher as he will. What would have become of me, without the aid which I have found in my wife, for theſe three years? I ſhould long ſince have been in my grave. The public indeed would have found this a trifling evil; but I ſhould have thought differently, I who have for theſe two years ſo ardently wiſhed once more to have the honour of ſeeing your majeſty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, November 22, 1762.

AFTER receiving your majeſty's letter I immediately cauſed the axe to reſound on the oak, the forges of Vulcan to be lighted up, and ſtripped the inhabitants of the foreſts of their ſkins: all which, in plain proſe, ſignifies that I ſent for the furrier to buy a good peliſſe; and the coachmaker and the ſmith to put my half-ruined carriage in order, ſo that it might be able to carry me over bad roads without accident. I therefore wait your majeſty's laſt commands, and the chaſſeur whom you will be kind enough to ſend me, to be my guide on the road.

Your majeſty, in all the journeys I have hitherto made, permitted me to bring madame d'Argens with me, that ſhe might watch over my querulous old machine, which is neither become more youthful nor better ſince theſe journeys: but I know not how to act at preſent, for I am ignorant of your good pleaſure; I ſhall therefore wait, before I make any preparation, to hear how it ſhall pleaſe you to decide.

I have

I have the honour to thank your majeſty for the porcelain of which you ſpeak; but I can aſſure you, ſire, my zeal toward your perſon reſembles the manner in which the Janſeniſts love God, for himſelf alone; and were you not to teſtify all the kindneſs with which you honour me, I ſhould notwithſtanding be one of the moſt affectionate of your ſubjects, and one of your greateſt admirers; though all people who reſpect great virtues and heroic qualities come under this deſcription. Where is the rational man who, having ſeen all that has paſſed during ſeven years, can refuſe his admiration?

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, February 20, 1763.

MY firſt care, on my arrival at Berlin, ought to be to thank your majeſty for the bounty with which you have this winter honoured me, at Leipſic; but I know you hate compliments as much as you delight in doing good: I ſhall therefore but feebly expreſs thoſe reſpectful

ſentiments of gratitude with which I am penetrated!

I found the city of Berlin in a ſtate of joy not to be expreſſed; but which, however, will be increaſed when you ſhall arrive there. The peace has infuſed an air of cheerfulneſs into all countenances; and, on your return, you will imagine your good people of Berlin are become ſo many Sybarites, intoxicated by pleaſure, and as wholly ſtrangers to grief as if they had forgotten all the woes which have been brought upon them by the war.

Your majeſty will no longer accuſe me of indolence. I have performed a journey from Leipſic to Berlin in two days, during which I have travelled night and day, without leaving my coach. I departed four hours after your majeſty, ill and in pain; but ſcarcely was I a league from Leipſic before I found myſelf much better; and the deſire I had to reviſit our holy land of Brandenburg entirely cured me. When I had paſſed a certain rivulet, which I was told ſeparated Saxony from Brandenburg, I imitated the Jews when they arrive within ſight of Jeruſalem; I praiſed the Lord that I was now in the country of the elect, and of the church of God. Your majeſty has really done very wiſely in making peace. Thanks to you, I hope the longeſt

longeſt journeys I ſhall make, for the remainder of my life, will be from Potſdam to Berlin. It is for you who have conquered Europe to travel over it, ſhould you think proper; but, for my part, I am well ſatisfied with limiting my journeys to viſits paid at the palace of Potſdam, and at that of Sans-Souci.

I wiſh, ſire, I now ſaw you there, in full enjoyment of the immortal glory which you have acquired; but having been patient during ſeven years, I may well be ſo for the ſpace of five weeks. This time however will to me appear long, as it will to all your ſubjects, who only aſpire to the pleaſure of ſeeing you again.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXXII.

From the King.

Dahlen, February 25, 1763.

YOUR letter, my dear marquis, has completely relieved me from the apprehenſions I had formed for your health. You were ill on the eve of my departure, but I was aſſured you had begun your journey on the next day. The great reſtoratives, air and exerciſe, have cured

you. This well proves the aſſertion of Boerhaave, that health is incompatible with a total deprivation of exerciſe. I know not what was the deſign of nature in ſtationing us on this earth. Were we to judge by our health, it ſhould appear that ſhe formed us rather to become poſtillions than philoſophers.

Since our ſeparation, I have been to Meiſſen. We have received letters from Vienna, which ſay that the preliminaries there occaſioned univerſal joy, and that the empreſs ſcarcely could forbear to kiſs the meſſenger. The ratifications of peace will arrive to-morrow, or the day after at the lateſt. According to my calculation, I do not believe I ſhall be able to quit Saxony ſooner than the twelfth of March. A fortnight will be neceſſary to finiſh my affairs in Sileſia, and I do not ſuppoſe I can be at Berlin before the twenty-ninth of next month.

The beſt of all this, my dear marquis, is, not my arrival, but, the arrival of peace; at which it is but juſt that good citizens and the public ſhould rejoice. For my own part, a poor old man, I am to return to a city in which I am a ſtranger to all except to its walls, and where I ſhall meet with no perſon of my acquaintance; where immenſe labours await me; and where I ſhall ſoon lay my old bones in a place of refuge,

and

and leave them to reſt, undiſturbed by war, calamities, and the raſcality of mankind.

I am here in a country houſe, where I paſs my time in retirement, with my uſual occupations. I want nothing but my dear marquis, whom I hope to ſee at Berlin; for which reaſon take an airing ſometimes in your carriage, my good D'Argens; pay this tribute to your health: your horſes await you at Potſdam; they are already there; and I, unworthy I, entreat you not to forget me.

Adieu; my compliments to Babet.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, February 25, 1763.

I HAD the honour to write to your majeſty the day after my arrival at Berlin. The joy and ſatisfaction which I met with among all the inhabitants have been daily increaſed. We meet with nothing but banquets and balls among the great, and feaſting among the lower orders. Amid all theſe pleaſures, I put up prayers for the happy return of your majeſty. I am tranſlating Plutarch.

I ſend

I ſend ten times a day to aſk whether the boats are in motion, and ten times a day am informed that they will not be afloat in leſs than a fortnight. This very much deranges the removal of my furniture; for, if I remove my effects by land, twelve carts will at leaſt be neceſſary, which, at twenty crowns per cart, will coſt me two hundred and forty crowns; inſtead of the twenty-five which I ſhould pay for a boat, ſhould it pleaſe the god of the waters to releaſe them from their icy chains.

How is your majeſty ſatisfied with your palace at Dahlen? I am in no pain leſt you ſhould not find amuſement, to fill up the few moments which ſtate affairs and the army will leave you, by reading the books which you have taken with you; and I imagine to myſelf that you have already run through the rapine of Verres, relative to the medimni of corn; and the ſtatues of the temples of Sicily.

A-propos of the medimni of Verres; I have the honour to inform your majeſty that the ſcheffel * of our extortioners daily lowers in price. I have informed every body that it is your majeſty's intention to ſell corn at twenty-two groſchen of Brandenburg money, when you

* A meaſure of corn. T.

ſhall

ſhall return to Potſdam, which obliges the monopolizers to lower their prices, that they may ſell off their ſtock before your arrival.

M. de Catt has been very ſeriouſly ill of a colic, but is now entirely recovered, and I imagine will depart to-morrow to join your majeſty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

From the King.

Dahlen, March 1, 1763.

PEACE at length is actually concluded, my dear marquis, and you will for once receive poſtillions with their flags, and their whole paraphernalia. God be praiſed, the end of my military labours is come. Do you aſk me what I am doing? Here I am, daily hearing Cicero harangue; whoſe orations againſt Verres I have long ended, and am now reading his oration for Muræna; beſide which, I have finiſhed the *Batteux* *: thus you ſee I am not indolent.

* From the context, I imagine this to be the title of a book: or perhaps it is ſome work written by the king himſelf. T.

With reſpect to yourſelf, my dear marquis, do not be impatient; the river is now navigable, and you have time enough to tranſport your furniture to Potſdam before my arrival. I ſhall remain here, or at Torgau, till the 13th. My journey into Sileſia will afford me employment for fifteen or ſeventeen days, ſo that I ſhall not be at Berlin before the 31ſt of this month, or the 2d of April; for I wiſh not to arrive on the 1ſt of the next month; the jokers would laugh at me, and call me April fool.

However pleaſing peace may be to the people of Berlin, it is not the ſame to the Saxons. Scarcely do we quit the cities, and ſcarcely are they evacuated, before Saxon execution arrives—"Pay, pay! Money for the king of Poland!" The people feel the inhumanity of this procedure: they are extremely poor; and, inſtead of affording them relief, their ruin is haſtened. This, my dear D'Argens, is the picture of Saxony, painted from the life. For my part, I behold all theſe executions as an indifferent ſpectator; but, as a citizen of the world, I cannot approve them.

I proceed with my regulations for internal provincial government. The detail in groſs of the army is finiſhed.

The French have ſigned their peace five

days before us: you will allow we have not been long after them; and that it would be difficult to complete ſo great a work more gallantly than we have done. His Poliſh majeſty is not yet cured; his health is uncertain. His return has been conſidered by the Saxons as a public calamity, a ſcourge more cruel than war and famine. But what are Saxony, its king, and miniſtry, to you and me? I aſpire to tranquillity of mind, and to rid myſelf in ſome meaſure of buſineſs, that I may obtain leiſure to reflect in private on my own paſſions; to ſhut myſelf up with my own mind, and to remove from all pomp, which, to own the truth, daily becomes more and more inſupportable.

D'Alembert has refuſed all offers from Ruſſia; I very much applaud this evident mark of diſintereſtedneſs, and think he has acted well in not expoſing himſelf to vagabond fortune: but, *Baſta*, this is too delicate a ſtring to be touched.

Good night, my dear marquis; it is very late; I have a great number of affairs to expedite tomorrow; and hope, during my ſtay in Saxony, to receive ſome letters from you. Adieu, my dear D'Argens; live in content, take care of your health, and do not forget me.

LETTER CLXXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 5, 1763.

AT length I have ſeen this ſo much deſired herald at arms paſſing under my windows, proclaiming peace, and followed by four or five thouſand people, whoſe acclamations and joyful cries were to me more affecting than the moſt harmonious muſic. You are tenderly beloved by your people, and well deſerve ſo to be: this cannot but be a double pleaſure to your majeſty.

While you are reading Cicero at Dahlen, I am here packing up his works. My effects have already been ſent in part to Potſdam. I feel on this occaſion the incumbrance of riches; nor did I imagine myſelf to be ſo wealthy. My goods cannot be conveyed in three boats; and, ſeeing ſo many packages and cheſts, I am tempted to believe that I have been one of your army commiſſaries.

I have another occupation beſide that of removal; which is, I am preparing my equipage to go to meet you, on your return, with the citizens of Berlin. I have ordered a blue coat to

be laced with gold, which is the uniform that the bankers and tradeſmen have aſſumed. Theſe gentlemen treat gold and embroidery as trifles; and I muſt certainly do as they do, ſince they have kindly been pleaſed to admit me one of their company. I ſhall have the horſe of good father Suarez, which is very gentle and peaceable, and worthy to carry an old philoſopher; ſo that I run no riſk.

I am not aſtoniſhed at the act of D'Alembert, for I have often had the honour to remark to your majeſty, I would rather be a good tradeſman in the ſtreet *des freres* than emperor of Ruſſia, which is a thought that I am daily more confirmed in.

I return your majeſty many thanks for the horſes, and will uſe them to your honour and glory.

Troops are daily coming in; and it is ſaid that three battalions of Quintus Icilius will arrive tomorrow, which are to be diſbanded, and incorporated with other regiments. I know not whether the queen of Hungary will diſband her forces, but I am very certain ſhe will diminiſh her kindred, and that the relationſhip of La Pompadour will be treated at Vienna as the free battalions will be at Berlin.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, March 9, 1763.

I HAVE been in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment at receiving a letter from your holy biſhop, who entreats me to lay another before your majeſty. I at firſt thought of returning it to the biſhop, but I afterward reflected that there might be ſomething in its contents which your majeſty would be glad to ſee; I therefore ſend you, along with that which I received, a copy of the letter I wrote to the biſhop, which is as follows:

"MY LORD,

"I HAVE ſent his majeſty the letter which "you did me the honour to incloſe to me to "be remitted to him, and wiſh it may produce "every effect which you deſire; and that his "majeſty, forgetful of the cauſes of diſcontent "which he may have againſt you, will on this "occaſion remember nothing but that, having "overcome his enemies, he has now, to crown "his glory, only generouſly to pardon, as he "has done already ſeveral times.

"Concerning

"Concerning what you have ſaid to me, "my lord, at the end of your letter, permit me "to reply, I have never required or received "from any perſon, to whom I have thought I "could be of the leaſt utility, any mark of gra- "titude except that which ſhould excite them "faithfully to ſerve his majeſty, and to afford "proofs of indubitable zeal for the ſervice of "the beſt maſter, and the moſt reſpectable "prince, on earth.

"I have the honour to be, &c."

I thought, ſire, I ſhould have had the honour to write ſome trifles to your majeſty which might amuſe you, but which I will write to-morrow, for we muſt not mingle the ſacred with the profane. *Non ſunt miſcenda ſacra profanis.* Your majeſty perceives that I, like Algarotti, can cite Latin in my letters, and, what is more, goſpel Latin.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOU travel, my dear marquis, by line and rule; whereas I ſtroll the country, and run hither and thither, like our lady the lunatic. I can well imagine you have been at my houſe at Sans-Souci, and that you are returned; but I will wager that a whole day was employed in this laborious work.

I ſhall not ſpeak to you of my journeys, the end of which is twofold — war and finance, things concerning which you trouble yourſelf but little. I have on my way collected anecdotes of the journey of the Emperor, on our frontiers; and I perceive, my dear D'Argens, that pictures appear more ſplendid when ſeen at a diſtance, than when cloſely examined. We princes ought not to exhibit ourſelves but in all our glory, like the god of maſs. The golden veſſel is diſplayed; the people bow in adoration; maſs is ſaid, accompanied by harmonious inſtruments; and the example of the multitude inſpires a kind of dark and gloomy awe. Some fellow comes, examines the whole ceremony, looks

looks into the chalice, and there finds ſome unleavened dough; then laughs at the ſuperſtition of the vulgar. Here, my dear marquis, is a moral fable for you, which you may turn to your own profit.

I have travelled to-day four miles in a carriage, and four on horſeback, which has rather fatigued me; and I ſhall conclude my letter with the apothegm of king Dagobert, who was very fond of his dogs, and when he left them never failed to addreſs them with—"The beſt "friends muſt part."

Adieu, my dear marquis; I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Straſburg, October 9, 1764.

BEFORE I ſpeak of my painful and melancholy journey, I muſt begin by excuſing myſelf to your majeſty, for a thoughtleſs act which I did not perceive I had been guilty of, till I reached Gœttingen. I had carried from Berlin, in the bottom of my cheſt, two parcels of the Reflections on Charles XII. to deliver them

them to M. Catt. Theſe parcels I forgot, and did not perceive they were in my cheſt till I was on my journey. I have delivered them to your majeſty's reſident at Frankfort, who has undertaken to remit them in all ſafety to your majeſty.

I come now to my journey. The fatigue of the bad roads having apparently excited and overheated the bad juices which an exceſſively ſedentary life had occaſioned, I was taken with a kind of dyſentery, which proceeded even to the voiding of blood. When I came to Gœttingen, I was obliged to remain there nine days, that I might be enabled to continue my route. I never before was ſo well pleaſed with having written my laſt works in the taſte of the gentlemen ending in *us* * ; for I have been attended to with the greateſt care by the moſt able profeſſors of the univerſity, who moſt of them have viſited me, and treated me in the politeſt manner poſſible. In fine, partly well, partly ill, they have rendered me capable of continuing my journey. Laugh hereafter at Greek if you can; for my part, I ſhall henceforth continually exclaim, Long live Greeks and profeſſors!

From Gœttingen I went to Caſſel, where I

* Alluding to the Latin terminations with which the learned of Germany affect to write their names. T.

arrived

arrived in ſo weak a ſtate that I had no inclination to ſee the landgrave, or his pictures. I thence, with great pain, proceeded to Frankfort, in a fever, and threatened with a return of the dyſentery. I wiſhed to have hired an apartment in that city, to reſt myſelf for a few days: but your reſident informed me I ſhould fail in my reſpect to your majeſty by ſo doing; becauſe the magiſtrates oblige the citizens who lodge Pruſſians to aſk their permiſſion, a manner in which they do not act with any other nation. He added that I muſt either remain at the inn or depart. I took my meaſures accordingly; for my nine days reſidence at an inn at Gœttingen had coſt me a hundred and fifty crowns, having with me ſeven perſons, including three ſervants.

In fine, ſire, I arrived at Straſburg half dead; and, after having been here four days, this is the firſt in which I have found ſtrength enough to have the honour to write to you. I intend to continue here a week longer, that I may be a little recovered. I have not above thirty miles to travel poſt; after which I ſhall proceed by water, on the Saone, to Lyons, and on the Rhone from Lyons to Arles, where I ſhall be within four miles of Aix.

I am well determined, on my return, not to travel

travel a hundred miles by land, from Straſburg to Berlin, but to go by water as far as Auſſone, which is ſixty leagues from Straſburg. From Straſburg I mean to deſcend the Rhine as far as Holland, where I intend to embark for Hamburg; to which, in fine weather, it is no more than two days ſail. You will tell me I may be drowned; to this I ſhall anſwer that all thoſe who go from Hamburg to England and Holland are not drowned.

Your majeſty will ſay, when you read my letter, you predicted every thing that has happened. I allow the truth of the aſſertion; but, were the journey again to make, I would again make it, becauſe it was abſolutely neceſſary. It was my duty both to ſecure a proviſion and a home for the marchioneſs d'Argens, after my death; which age, and my weak ſtate of health, ſeemed to ſpeak at no great diſtance.

To weary your majeſty with this detail of ſickneſs and bad roads is too much.

I learned at Gœttingen that moſt of the old miniſters, counſellors, &c. of Hanover, who had been protected by the late king, have demanded their diſmiſſion, and have retired. My lord Bute governs the electorate, the inhabitants of which join the Engliſh in their exclamations againſt him.

When

When I came to Straſburg, I found what I imagined could not but have happened, that is to ſay, I found your majeſty univerſally admired. Without the leaſt flattery, there is but one voice on this ſubject; and people of ſenſe have informed me that I ſhould find the ſame opinion through all France, of which I did not entertain a moment's doubt.

There are two very fine German regiments here, and the remainder of the garriſon appears to me very paſſable. I ſometimes ſee the guard file off from my window, and no longer recognize the diſcipline of my own times, or the ſame manner of clothing and treating the men. Should France happen, for ſome ſpace of time, to have miniſters of the war department who ſhould be military men, and ſhould conſtables in petticoats * no longer be made, a thing which may happen to-morrow, the troops would be greatly benefited.

The body of marſhal Saxe ſtill continues between four or five deal boards, which form a wretched caſe in which his coffin is incloſed. I very much fear he will long continue to be thus

* *Gonille.* I do not know, nor can I find, any ſuch word; I have only imagined it came from the Italian word *gonella*, or *petticoat*. The word *gonelle* is uſed in French to ſignify a hunting dreſs for men or women. T.

vilely

vilely lodged, and that the mauſoleum which had been intended for him will have the fate of that intended for cardinal de Fleury.

The Jeſuits here are very gay and tranquil, as they are throughout the province of Lorrain. Hence it will follow that, from theſe two provinces, they will ſome day overrun France again, and, like wild beaſts ruſhing from their dens, will pitileſsly rend thoſe by whom they have been perſecuted. I ſhall not ſee this event; but your majeſty, who is yet young, will be a witneſs of it. It muſt be owned that, in all this affair of the Jeſuits, there has been much inconſiſtency.

Should your majeſty do me the favour to anſwer me, I entreat you to addreſs your letter—"To my chamberlain, the marquis d'Argens, at "Aix in Provence."

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Eguilles, December 2, 1764.

I CANNOT expreſs to your majeſty the pleaſure and conſolation that I received from the

the letter with which you have honoured me, and which I found at Aix. I had great need of ſomething that might diſſipate my gloom. I had heard at Lyons that my brother D'Eguilles was gone to Paris to attend to a law ſuit, which was the reſult of that he had carried on againſt his parliament. By way of parentheſis, it was very fortunate that the king had annulled the ſentence of the parliament of Provence; for by that he was condemned to loſe his office of preſident, which was confiſcated in favour of the king, and to be baniſhed the kingdom for ten years. This would have retarded the concluſion of my buſineſs.

In fine, D'Eguilles has obtained every thing he aſked from the council: he is continued in his place; the king has only commanded him not to go to Aix, till he ſhall grant him permiſſion. He is come to Eguilles, which is but a league diſtant from that city; and I am with him and my mother.

My affairs are terminated to my ſatisfaction. The arrangement I have to make, relative to an eſtate which is ceded to me, will not detain me longer than the month of April. As I therefore eſtimate, I ſhall have the happineſs to throw myſelf at your feet at the beginning of ſummer; ſhould I not before that time depart,

and

and make my reverence to the Eternal Father. To own the truth, I ſhould willingly give the preference on this ſubject to your majeſty.

I am very deſirous of executing the commands you gave me, and to get rid of every diſeaſe with which I am afflicted. I communicated your will to my phyſician, who adviſed me to requeſt you would have the goodneſs to command that, inſtead of ſixty-one, I ſhould not be more than fifty years of age, at moſt; and that you would ſend me, from the next Leipſic fair, a new ſtomach, in excellent condition; becauſe the ſecret of beſtowing ſuch kind of goods on old people, who ſcarcely can digeſt any food, is unknown in Provence.

I think, ſire, it is almoſt as condemnable to mock at the ſufferings of a poor philoſopher, of ſixty-one, as it would be for me to reproach an old ſoldier with the wounds he has received. Do you imagine a man may ſtudy forty years without greatly injuring his health? You will reply, "I have been ſtudying thirty years, I go-"vern a great kingdom, I command my own ar-"mies, and I undertake wars as difficult as they "are glorious, yet I am notwithſtanding in good "health." Since the days of Julius Cæſar and Marcus Aurelius, one man has appeared in Europe, who, equalling the glory of the firſt emperor,

peror, and the wiſdom of the ſecond, has notwithſtanding digeſted well, therefore all philoſophers ought to have a good digeſtion. This is not concluſive reaſoning; it ſins againſt every law of logic; you therefore have no right to pretend I ought to be in good health, becauſe you have undergone more fatigues in one day than I have in ten years.

Really, ſire, I am much vexed that the ſole thing, concerning which you have not reaſoned conſiſtently, ſhould be my health. Would to God that you were as great a phyſician as you are a king; I ſhould long ſince have poſſeſſed the ſtrength of Hercules; you would have added this benefit to the various others with which you have loaded me, and the remembrance of which I ſhall maintain beyond the grave; that is if our ſouls remember, after death, what happened to their bodies during life. Forgive this ſhort mark of ſcepticiſm, coming from a country where the catholic faith reigns ſo powerfully that the gates of hell cannot prevail againſt it. I occaſionally entertain doubts, the ſolution to which I will requeſt from you, in the philoſophic palace of Sans-Souci.

The ſon of Gregory, one of our good Berlin merchants, is at Marſeilles with the richeſt bankers of that city. He has promiſed to come

and ſee me at Eguilles, before his departure, which is not very diſtant. I ſhall do myſelf the honour to remit a letter, by his favour, to your majeſty, which ſhall be written with more common ſenſe than the preſent; and ſhall prove, ſire, that a Provençal ſun has not put a brain, that had been tempered by the cold climates of the north, into a ſtate of abſolute fermentation.

The court has juſt publiſhed an ordinance, by which the ſeminaries of the Jeſuits, in the provinces of Alſatia, Franche Comté, Hainault, and Flanders, where they had been preſerved, are now deſtroyed. Yet the Jeſuits are permitted, after having left the kingdom, to return, and live there without an oath of allegiance. Your majeſty knows Racine by rote: permit me to cite the following paſſage in this place:

——— *Que d'un cœur incertain,*
Je parerai d'un bras les coups de l'autre main *.

What, ſire, are your Jeſuits doing in Sileſia? They eat, drink, and ſleep in peace. Your goſpel miniſters, whom we catholics call preachers, do the ſame. The Rabbins of the ſynagogue, among whom is my Hebrew maſter, M. Ra-

* With heart uncertain, I ward with one arm the blows the other gives.

phael, peaceably enjoy a ſimilar privilege. Sage Frederic! Philoſophic king! under whoſe government men think differently, yet do not diſpute, may I once again ſee you before I die! This is my only hope.

In the mean time, if you have any pity on a poor exile, baniſhed the land of philoſophy, deign to conſole him, till he ſhall return to Sans-Souci, by honouring him with your anſwer.

Among your numerous French ſurgeons, ſhould you by chance have a vacant place, I have met with one of the moſt able men in France, who would be delighted to go into a country which is now become the country of all men of merit.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXC.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Avignon, September 10, 1765.

YOUR majeſty will think it ſtrange that I have not done myſelf the honour to write to you ſince the laſt letter you had the goodneſs to

ſend me. I was on the road to Berlin when I received it, and I ſuppoſed I ſhould ſoon have had the ſatisfaction to throw myſelf at your feet, when I was attacked, five days after my departure, by an inflammatory fever, which has remained with me near two months. I was in a ſmall town of Dauphiné, called Montelimart. At length nature, rather than the knowledge of the phyſician who attended me, gave me relief, and reſtored me ſtrength, ſufficient to be carried on a litter to a covered boat, in which, deſcending the Rhone, I was brought to Avignon. I ſuppoſed I could regain Provence and return home, there to find the neceſſary aid for the recovery of my health; but it was impoſſible for me to proceed, becauſe my journey muſt have been by land; for this I was too weak, and too much incommoded by the diarrhea that ſucceeded to the fever, after the latter had left me. I therefore remained at Avignon, where I very fortunately met with an excellent and very celebrated phyſician, who repaired the miſtakes of his predeceſſor, and afforded me relief.

I am, notwithſtanding, exceedingly weak ſtill, and unable to go abroad; my legs continue to be much ſwelled; for, by the adminiſtration of bark, and other remedies, that had been given me by the firſt phyſician, to free me from the fever,

fever, he had brought on the beginning of a dropſy, from which, however, I have nothing at preſent to fear.

This, ſire, is what has prevented me from the performance of my duty, and from writing to your majeſty. Though I flatter myſelf you know my probity, and uprightneſs, ſufficiently not to imagine I endeavour to impoſe upon you, in order to juſtify my delay in returning to Potſdam; yet, ſire, for my own ſatisfaction, and to calm the fears I entertain of diſpleaſing your majeſty, I have the honour to ſend you the certificate of the phyſician, to whom I am indebted for my life. He is a man famous for his art, an amiable philoſopher, and an old friend of the lord marſhal, to whom he has written reſpecting me. I have cauſed the ſaid certificate to be proved before the firſt magiſtrates of the city; for the only thing which can at preſent impede the entire recovery of my health is, the apprehenſion that your majeſty ſhould think me capable of ſeeking for vain pretexts, to prolong my abſence. By the certificate which I ſend you, it will be ſeen that I cannot begin my journey in leſs than ſix weeks, and that I muſt likewiſe travel very ſlowly. The weather will then be very ſevere, eſpecially about the middle of my journey.

If your majeſty will grant me permiſſion to

remain here till the firſt of March, I ſhall then arrive at Potſdam about the middle of April; and I ſhall perform the journey with the greater eaſe, becauſe my brother, who commands the regiment of *royal-vaiſſeau*, and whoſe regiment is in garriſon at Maubeuge in Flanders, will accompany me as far as Bruſſels, and even to Weſel; being now in Provence, on his half yearly furlough, and intending to return to his regiment in the month of March.

I moſt earneſtly entreat your majeſty not to be offended at any thing I have propoſed; you have but to command, and let my ſtate of health be what it will, ſhould you wiſh it, I will depart on the receipt of your letter, if you deign to honour me with one, or according to the orders which you ſhall ſend me. If you think proper to honour me with an anſwer, let me requeſt you to ſend your letter by way of M. Schutz, banker, at Berlin, from whom it will be remitted from banker to banker, without my addreſs being written on it; becauſe, ſhould my name be ſeen, there is danger of its being detained at the poſt-office of Paris. The laſt letter, with which it pleaſed your majeſty to honour me, was ſent by way of Meſſieurs Girard and Michelet, and was ſafely delivered to M. Mettra at Paris; but the latter having directed it immediately

immediately to me from Paris, it was three months detained, and I did not receive it till I had been four days on my route toward Berlin. It was ſent after me from Aix, at which place it had but juſt arrived.

I ſhall not paſs through Paris, ſire; for what could I do in this city, where the minds of the people are in a greater degree of agitation than that which diſturbs the brains of the news-writers?

I am informed, ſire, that D'Alembert has juſt written a work, which will one day raiſe up many enemies againſt him. I ſhould not be ſorry, ſhould he be perſecuted, provided perſecution ſhould bring him to Potſdam. I have been aſſured that he was in danger of death, at the time when I myſelf was very ill. We ſhould have been both exceedingly ſurpriſed ſo ſuddenly to have met in the reſidence of the great Beelzebub, who keeps men like Trajan and Plato under his gripe.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, January 1, 1766.

PERMIT me at the beginning of the year to wiſh the accompliſhment of all your majeſty's deſires. I imagine, ſire, I can make no wiſh, the fulfilling of which will be more advantageous than that of praying Heaven to grant your health may be as good as your glory is great; that your majeſty may have the ſtrength of Hercules, having already acquired his immortality; for I have the honour to know your majeſty too well to ſuppoſe you have any inclination to martyr yourſelf, in this world, that you may be immortal, in the next.

I had the honour to write to your majeſty after the fit of ſickneſs which had brought me to death's door, and had obliged me to ſtop at Montelimart in Dauphiné, and afterward to cauſe myſelf to be carried to Avignon, where I was obliged to remain ſix weeks. I am at preſent in good health, and will depart on the firſt of March, that I may arrive at Potſdam as ſoon as poſſible, where I expect to be toward the fifteenth of April.

Your majeſty not having done me the honour

to

to acquaint me with your commands, after I took the liberty to write to you from Avignon, I fear leſt you ſhould be offended with me; but I entreat you to conſider that no efforts of the will can counteract ſuperior force. M. Catt has informed me that your majeſty thought my having ſent certificates a uſeleſs act. I could have wiſhed, had the thing been poſſible, to have ſent you the pope's vice-legate in a letter, and all the apoſtolic protonotaries who are at Avignon; for there is nothing I dread ſo much as to fail, in the leaſt, in the reſpect which I owe to your majeſty's commands; but, in fine, ſire, permit me once more to repeat, we are none of us bound to act impoſſibilities; and I am too well acquainted with your majeſty's juſtice, to doubt you would impute that as negligence to me which does not depend on myſelf.

The news I have heard in my ſolitude is, that the health of the Dauphin continues in a deplorable condition. His loſs will throw two-thirds of the kingdom into a ſtate of conſternation. The remainder will rejoice in their hearts without appearing ſo to do; for this remainder conſiſts of the Janſeniſts, of whom he was the avowed enemy.

D'Alembert has been burrowing into the affairs of the Jeſuits and Janſeniſts, and has written

written a work on the fall of the Jeſuits; in which he ſometimes juſtifies and often condemns them. In this ſame work the Janſeniſts are treated without mercy, and much more ſo than the Jeſuits; for which reaſon all theſe people, oppoſite as they are to each other, have united in attacking D'Alembert. They have enquired into his birth, they have criticiſed his actions, and, in fine, they have filled France with libels, in which he is treated without pity. However philoſophic we may be, ſuch things diſpleaſe, eſpecially when philoſophy is not entirely ſtripped of ſelf-love. The ſage ceaſes to be a ſage, when he interferes in the quarrels of prieſts and monks. It is neceſſary to be as thoughtleſs and as petulant as the French in general are, to enter into ſuch diſputes. Corneille has ſaid of the Romans,

Romains contre Romains, parens contre parens,
Combattre follement pour le choix des tyrans *.

We may ſay with more truth of the French,

Français contre Français, parens contre parens,
Combattre follement pour le choix des pedans †.

I have written to D'Alembert, and have not

* Romans with Romans, and kindred with kindred, madly combat for the choice of tyrants.

† Frenchmen with Frenchmen, and kindred with kindred, madly combat for the choice of pedants.

failed

failed to quote the paſſage from Moliere, *Que diable alloit il faire dans cette galere* ?*

I muſt own, ſire, beſide the great obligations I owe your majeſty, I am indebted for others of a very eſſential nature to the Germans. By living among them did I learn to caſt off that turbulent ſpirit which ſeems inſeparable from the genius of a Frenchman. What connection is there between philoſophy and the bull Unigenitus; or of what importance to the diſciple of Bayle or Gaſſendi is the ſtate of the Janſeniſts or the Moliniſts? What ought we to ſay of a wiſe man, or one who wiſhes to be thought wiſe, who troubles himſelf concerning the diſtinctions to be obſerved between madmen, in their lunatic hoſpital? Janſeniſts, Jeſuits, Calviniſts, Lutherans, Anabaptiſts, and Quakers, are, to the philoſopher, all madmen.

I have received a letter, ſome days ſince, from Voltaire, who has ſent me his works, and who has been kind enough to tell me that, as I paſſed through Lyons, it would be ſhameful for brother Iſaac not to come and viſit brother Voltaire; and that, in imitation of the hermits Anthony and Paul, he wiſhes to receive my benediction before he dies. But I ſhall not paſs

* What the devil had I to do on ſhipboard?

through

through Geneva, unleſs I receive an expreſs permiſſion from your majeſty ſo to do; nor can all the hermits and fathers of the deſert prevail over me, unleſs I have your majeſty's orders.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Eguilles, January 4, 1766.

SOME days ſince I had the honour to write to your majeſty, that I might enjoy the pleaſure of wiſhing you a happy new year, undiſturbed in mind, and unafflicted in body. Should a grammarian ever comment on my letter, he would ſay that, when we write to a philoſophic king, what is underſtood by "undiſturbed "in mind" is "undiſturbed by the intrigues of "foreign courts;" becauſe all accidents which depend on the ſage can never give him any diſturbance; but that all the wiſdom of the world is ineffectual in oppoſition to accidents occaſioned by folly: therefore to wiſh an undiſturbed mind to ſuch a king, is to wiſh that good ſenſe may this year reign in every court of Europe. Amen. So be it.

That

That of France has juſt loſt a great prince, who loved the people, and would have rendered them happy, had their happineſs ever depended on him. He not only died like a ſaint, which, to us philoſophers, is an affair of ſmall conſequence, but with the fortitude of a hero. A few moments before his death, he ſent for his three children. To the duke de Berry, who is hereafter to aſcend the throne, he ſaid the moſt noble and affecting things. I believe the Janſeniſts will gain much leſs by his death than they hoped. The king, in three months, has totally deſtroyed two parliaments; that of Pau, and that of Rennes: criminal actions have been preferred againſt ſeven members of the latter, who have been ſo licentious in their conduct as to write the moſt inſolent anonymous letters to the king. One of theſe criminals was audacious enough to ſay, as he was paſſing the place in which the equeſtrian ſtatue of the king is erected, in preſence of ſeveral perſons who ſurrounded him——"Gen-"tlemen, we defend our rights againſt this "ſtatue!"

The clemency that has been obſerved, during ten years, relative to all the inſults which people of low rank, dignified with places which they had purchaſed, daily made to majeſty and the royal authority, had emboldened them entirely to caſt away

away decorum. The parliament of Thouloufe had iſſued a decree againſt the duke de Fitz-James, governor of Languedoc, ordering him to be taken into cuſtody; that of Rouen had annulled two edicts of the king's council, and forbidden them to be carried into execution under pain of death. Theſe tie-wig gentry imagine themſelves people of importance; they have juſt been taught, at their own expence, that the king has no need of any other means but his own will to effect their annihilation.

Has your majeſty ſeen the new edition of the *Dictionnaire Philoſophique** of Voltaire? He has cited me, in the preface, as the author of the article *Geneſis*. He had been ſearching in my Timœus, for what I had ſaid on Moſes and the Pentateuch, to which he has added ſeven or eight good impieties. He was induced to play me this trick, becauſe his book had been ranked with the eternally anathematized, by the aſſembly of the clergy; and, to diminiſh the ſcandal of this condemnation, he has, in this new edition, inſerted the names of ſeveral perſons, who, he ſays, have ſent him the principal articles of his Dictionary. The man will die as he has lived.

I have juſt received four copies of his Dictionary, which he has ſent me as a preſent. I can-

* The Philoſophic Dictionary.

not

not deny that the chief things in his article Geneſis are written by me, for they are extracted from my notes on Timœus: but I ſent him none of them; and ſtill leſs did I write four or five very pleaſant impieties, which, however are very capable of exciting the clamours of the fanatics. Should your majeſty not meet with a copy of this book at Berlin, I will do myſelf the honour to deliver one, on my arrival; for you will certainly have this copy as ſoon as any one for which you could ſend, I being firmly reſolved to depart at the end of the month of February, the weather being already tolerably fine.

I again earneſtly entreat your majeſty would not be offended at my not having arrived at the beginning of the winter; for, however great my wiſh ſo to arrive, the thing was impoſſible; and, after a ſevere illneſs by which I was afflicted, I was too weak to be able to undertake ſo long a journey, during the ſevere weather of winter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Eguilles, March 20, 1766.

I SHALL have the honour to throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet before the end of the month of April. In three days I ſhall leave this place, and immediately proceed to Straſburg. I have hired a carriage, and, what is more, paid for it, as far as Beſançon. I ſhall perform the journey in a good coach, without travelling poſt; for, to ſpeak the truth, I have found that, in order to go the faſter, I muſt ſubmit to the neceſſity of proceeding by ſuch ſtages as I have agreed ſhould be made, with the coachman with whom I have bargained to drive me. This is a certain means which I have diſcovered, to preſerve me from the attacks and temptations of indolence. With reſpect to illneſs, I have paid ſo much attention to my health, and have been ſo careful of my ſtomach,

Que je défie bien toux, fièvre, apoplexie,
De pouvoir à cent ans attenter à ma vie *.

From Lyons to Berlin I ſhall travel in company with M. Stoſch, who informs me he has

* That I defy cough, fever, and apoplexy, for theſe hundred years, to deprive me of life.

ſold your majeſty a magnificent collection of pictures and curioſities. He has three times been to viſit me here at Eguilles, and is waiting for me at Lyons, where he has ſome buſineſs by which he is neceſſarily detained. I find your majeſty continues to enrich your palaces, and eſpecially that of Sans-Souci, by the precious relics of antiquity; the leaſt of which are of greater worth than all thoſe poſſeſſed by the church of Magdeburg; I do not even except the Virgin's ſlipper.

I ſhall have many things to tell your majeſty of what is paſſing in this country. The king has at length diſcovered that men proper only to ſit in judgment on a law-ſuit aſſume the right of being his equals. He has puniſhed them, and reduced them to their juſt level. Never were the parliaments under Louis XIV. ſo humbled. All people of ſenſe are delighted. Theſe pretended defenders of the people become by their haughtineſs inſupportable to the people themſelves. I was never better convinced how neceſſary it is that a king ſhould be abſolute, than ſince I have been in France. All the middle ranks, between the people and the king, are but ſo many petty tyrants, who equally fail in their duty to their maſter and their fellow citizens. In vain is it ſaid that, under a bad

king, thoſe perſons who balance his power are very uſeful. To this I anſwer, I have no doubt that the people were infinitely more happy under Louis XI. than in England under the reign of the houſe of Stuart, to whoſe power there was ſo great a counterpoiſe. Your majeſty will be aſtoniſhed to find me become ſo much an anti-parliamentarian; the reaſon is in my having learned, during a reſidence of five-and-twenty years at Berlin, the good that reſults from having only one maſter who knows the art of making himſelf obeyed; and that I never was better convinced of the reality of this good than ſince I have ſeen what is paſſing in France.

While I have been here, I have endeavoured to ſearch into the reaſons and cauſes of many things; and I have attained my wiſhes. It would really, ſire, have been a pity had I died at Avignon, for I have laid in good ſtore of proviſions for our philoſophic ſuppers at Sans-Souci. While growing old, I have been collecting what may well ſupply the loſs of imagination, and the decline of wit; and I have furniſhed my memory with thirty tales, to recompenſe my ſoul for the heavineſs which ſhe daily feels increaſe, and her ſmall remaining ſhare of vivacity. Any other perſon would regret having loſt the little imagination which Nature had beſtowed,

beſtowed, and would dread to appear ſtripped of the quality which gives moſt pleaſure in the world; but I know your majeſty will not curſe the fig-tree for bearing nothing but leaves, in a ſeaſon when it cannot bear fruit. This, ſire, is my comfort.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, December 14, 1767.

I HAVE the honour to ſend your majeſty Verſes which are ſold as mine at Potſdam and Berlin. I wiſh I had written them, for they are excellent, worthy of Voltaire, or of you; and, had you not yourſelf been praiſed in them, I ſhould have imagined you were the author; for I am acquainted with no perſon in this country capable of writing any ſo good; ſhould you not be of the ſame opinion, I ſhould then ſay—"In "vain does a miniſter league againſt the Cid."

Vers au Roi de Pruſſe.

La mère de la mort, la vieilleſſe tremblante,
A de ſes bras d'airain courbé mon faible corps,
Et des maux, qu'elle entraîne une ſuite effrayante,
De mon ame immortelle attaque les reſſorts.

Je brave tes aſſauts, redoutable vieilleſſe ;
Je vis auprès d'un ſage, et je ne te crains pas ;
Il te prêtera plus d'appas
Que le plaiſir trompeur n'en donne à la jeuneſſe.
Coulez, mes derniers jours, ſans trouble et ſans terreur ;
Coulez près d'un héros dont le mâle génie
Vous fait goûter en paix le ſonge de la vie.
Et dépouille la mort de ce qu'elle a d'horreur.
Ma raiſon, qu'il èclaire, en eſt plus intrépide ;
Mes pas, par lui guidés, en ſont plus affermis :
Tout mortel que Pallas couvre de ſon égide,
Ne craint pas les Dieux ennemis.
Philoſophe des rois, que ma carrière eſt belle !
J'irai de ce palais, par un chemin de fleurs,
Aux champs elyſiens, parler à Marc-Aurèle
Du plus grand de ſes ſucceſſeurs ;
A Salluſte jaloux je lirai votre hiſtoire,
A Lycurgue vos lois, à Virgile vos vers :
Je ſurprendrai les morts, ils ne pourront m'en croire ;
Nul d'eux n'a raſſemblé tant de talens divers.
Mais lorſque j'aurai vu les ombres immortelles,
N'allez pas après moi confirmer mes récits ;
Vivez, rendez heureux ceux qui vous ſont ſoumis,
Et n'allez que bien tard rejoindre vos modèles.

Le Marquis d'Argens *.

The

* *Verſes to the King of Pruſſia.*

Trembling age, the mother of death, with iron arm has bent my feeble body ; and its fearful train of ills attacks the elaſtic powers of my immortal ſoul. Formidable age, I brave thy aſſaults; I live with a ſage, and I fear thee not; for he will afford age itſelf more delight than ever is felt in the deceitful pleaſures of youth. Paſs on, old Time, without vexation

The poet, ſire, who has ſigned theſe lines with my name, has certainly done me much honour; though he is very much deceived, however great an admirer I may be of your majeſty's glory, ſhould he believe I am in any haſte to go and converſe with Marcus Aurelius; there are others enough, who on thoſe fatal ſhores may acquit themſelves of ſo ſplendid an embaſſy.

A-propos, ſire, of death: as it is the natural condition of man to be ſubject to rheumatiſm, ſpaſm, and fever, and ſince no one better fulfils theſe functions than I do, if, by chance, taking care of my health, I ſhould, contrary to the order of things, be tolerably well, is it your

ation or terror; paſs in preſence of a hero, whoſe bold genius gives me to enjoy the dream of life in peace, and ſtrips death of all its horrors. By him enlightened, my reaſon becomes more intrepid; guided by him, my ſteps leſs ſtaggering. The mortal whom Pallas protects with her ægis fears not the inimical gods. Oh philoſophic king! how pleaſant is my route! From this palace ſhall I depart by flower-ſtrewed paths to elyſian fields; there with Marcus Aurelius to converſe of the greateſt of his ſucceſſors. To Salluſt will I read your hiſtory, your laws to Lycurgus, and to Virgil your verſe. The envious dead will ſtand aſtoniſhed, unable to believe; not one of them poſſeſſed talents ſo various. But having ſeen theſe immortal ſhades, come not to confirm my recital. Live, and render all beneath you happy. Let it be late before you join the heroes who have been your guides.

The marquis d'Argens.

majeſty's pleaſure that I ſhould go to Berlin? I entreat you would ſend your commands on this ſubject by M. de Catt, that in this caſe I may take an additional ſupply of drops, and ſome few packets of powders, in violation of all the laws of this beſt of poſſible worlds, in which it is neceſſary we ſhould always be in affliction. I ſhould not murmur againſt theſe laws, could I but write verſes equal to thoſe which I have the honour to ſend your majeſty, and which I would rather have compoſed than all thoſe which are, have been, or ſhall be written, by the good chevalier D'Ora.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, January 5, 1768.

YOUR eulogium on prince Henry thawed me for half an hour, and your eloquence produced on my body that which the hotteſt ſtove has not been able to effect for theſe three weeks. You have the fire of Demoſthenes, the noble vehemence of Bourdaloue; and this, when-

ever you think proper, you temper by the eaſe of Flechier.

Why have you twice repeated, in one page, a phraſe that expreſſes the ſame thought in the ſame words?

The phraſe is this—"A child that has left "no trace of its exiſtence."—Had you not committed this ſlight inadvertency, you would have performed what is not the lot of mortal to perform, you would have written a faultleſs work. The pages 8 and 9 of your Diſcourſe are of more worth than the Dictionary of Suidas; and I would rather have written page 20 than all the books of Scaliger. With reſpect to page 27, it is ſuperior to any praiſe of mine. To Bourdaloue, Patru, and the other great maſters of the art, do I leave its eulogium.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Potſdam, February 5, 1768.

AMONG the ſufferings the enumeration of which your majeſty has made, in the verſes which you have done me the honour to ſend,

you have forgotten the tooth-ach, which preciſely was the pain that prevented me from returning thanks to your majeſty ſooner for your epiſtle, which is excellent. I have read it twice, and have continually admired with what art your majeſty can paint the moſt ſimple things, and the truth of colouring with which you render them valuable. The deſcription of the purple fever is admirable; nor can circumſtances, which at firſt appear ſo common, be more nobly expreſſed. The ſide blow which you give the bigots made me laugh heartily, on one ſide of my mouth; for my tooth prevented me from moving the other.

In fine, ſire, whatever ſpleen your majeſty may attribute to me, I thought your work charming; nor have I thought myſelf ill-treated except in the epithet crafty, which you beſtow on me. Had you placed this word at the end of a line, I ſhould have ſaid nothing, becauſe I know the want of a rhyme ſometimes hurries away the beſt poets; but to call me crafty in the middle of a verſe, is truly no chriſtian act.

Continue, ſire, to write good works, were you even to write againſt all my diſeaſes; while I will continue to take my diet drink to relieve my lungs, which are little better than

thoſe that Maupertuis moiſtened with Barbadoes water, which water preſently brought him to perfect maturity.

With reſpect to myſelf, I wiſh to remain unripe a few years longer, if poſſible; becauſe I have not finiſhed the compilation of all the paſſages I want, in order to compoſe ſome dozen volumes in folio, which may be of great uſe to poſterity, for all perſons who ſhall happen to be troubled with a diarrhæa.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE, Berlin, Sunday morning; written with much coughing.

IN anſwer to the queſtions which your majeſty has done me the honour to propoſe, I will ſpeak with the impartiality of a Jew, who has no predilection for Geneva or Rome, and who with the ſame eye beholds a Socinian and a Catholic.

1. The divine nature of the Son of God was not an article of faith in the three firſt centuries. Jeſus was then only ſuppoſed to be a creature infinitely more perfect than others, but yet much

much inferior to God the Father, who was only, thus to ſpeak, the father of Jeſus by adoption.

This we clearly ſee from the teſtimony of the greateſt fathers of the church, who lived before the council of Nice. Origen, who was born about the year 185, and who flouriſhed in the third century, ſays, in his work againſt Celſus, that there were only in his time ſome among the vulgar who believed the Son to be equal to the Father, and like him a god; but that theſe were ignorant people. The catholic doctors at preſent endeavour to juſtify Origen, and torture certain paſſages in his works; but this pitiable conduct can only deceive ſuch people as are unacquainted with the writings of the father. St. Jerome acted more openly than the modern theologians; for he unequivocally accuſes Origen of having affirmed that the Son, compared with the Father, was but a feeble light; that he was not the truth, but the type of the truth; that he was viſible, and the Father inviſible. The famous Huet, biſhop of Avranches, has in theſe latter ages allowed that Origen had very clearly ſaid, the Son, in compariſon with the Father, was not goodneſs itſelf, but the image of goodneſs.

This was the doctrine of the fathers who had preceded Origen. None of them had ſuppoſed

Jeſus

Jeſus the equal of his Father. St. Juſtin, who lived about the year 150, ſays, in his Dialogue, pages 356 and 357, that the Father is inviſible, the Son viſible, and that the grandeur of the Son does not approach to that of the Father.

Were I inclined, I might here inſert the authorities of ten other fathers of the church; but I refer the curious on this ſubject to a work of father Petau *. In the eighth chapter of the firſt book, they will ſee that author has eſtabliſhed three points. The firſt is, that the doctrine condemned by the council of Nice, in the perſon of Arius, was not peculiar to him, but that it had been common to many writers, who were his predeceſſors; the ſecond, that the dogma of the divinity of the Son of God was not eſtabliſhed, nor explained, before the council of Nice; and the third, that Alexander, biſhop of Alexandria, did but complain from exaggeration, in his letter mentioned by Theodoret, that Arius had invented a new dogma, which no one had ever taught before.

What more can be demanded than a confeſſion like this from a catholic divine, who was himſelf a Jeſuit? I allow father Petau was afterward very angry for having made this confeſſion. His firſt purpoſe was but ſimply to

* Intitled *Petavii Dogmata Theologica.*

give

give a picture of the doctrine of the firſt ages, and he did not diſguiſe the opinions of the fathers: but he ſoon perceived this was to teach the public a thing of which they ought to remain ignorant; and he was exclaimed againſt, not only in France, but even in England, where ſeveral proteſtant divines ill-treated him in their writings. He then compoſed a preface, purpoſely to deſtroy that which he had before eſtabliſhed. He changed from white to black, and ſacrificed the fame of a good critic to that of an orthodox divine. He did penance to the fathers, and uttered a thouſand puerilities to prove their orthodoxy relative to the Trinity.

2. At the council of Nice it was that the Holy Ghoſt was declared the third perſon of the Trinity.

3. There is no general council in which the infallibility of the pope was eſtabliſhed; on the contrary, general councils have ſometimes depoſed popes. The doctrine of the infallibility of the pope is only *publicly* maintained by the theologians of the other ſide of the Alps, and whiſpered in France by the Jeſuits.

4. The ſilly doctrine of tranſubſtantiation began to be acknowledged in the divinity ſchools of the eleventh century, and was confirmed by the council of Trent, on account of its

its having been rejected by Luther and Calvin as a ridiculous novelty.

5. The dogma of purgatory is of more ancient date than that of tranſubſtantiation. Some ſlight traces of it are diſcovered in the writers of the ſixth and ſeventh centuries. It was entirely admitted in the eighth, the monks having diſcovered in this doctrine a ſource of immenſe wealth.

6. The marriages of prieſts were not aboliſhed in the third century; before which time, there had been councils that endeavoured to defend them; among others thoſe of Elvira, Toledo, Valentia, and Arles; but the canons of theſe councils were only executed feebly; and we find in catholic authors—for the aſſertions of proteſtants might be ſuſpected on this ſubject—we find, I ſay, a million of proofs of the marriages of prieſts and of biſhops down to the thirteenth century.

Giraldus Cambrenſis, who lived in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, ſays in the treatiſe *de Laudibus Walliæ*, inſerted in the *Anglia Sacra*, page 450, that the biſhops married in Wales.

St. Bernard, who lived in the twelfth century, and whoſe teſtimony I do not believe the catholics refuſe, ſays, in ſpeaking of Malachi, his

his contemporary and his friend, whoſe life he wrote, that the eight prelates who had governed the church of Celſus, to which biſhopric Malachi had ſucceeded, had all been married.

In the Hiſtory of Normandy by the ſieur de Maſſeville, a catholic author, who has not been dead thirty years, we find that Robert, the ſon of Richard duke of Normandy, being archbiſhop of Rouen, married a lady of quality, by whom he had children, to whom he bequeathed the wealth of the church. We read in the firſt volumes of the *Journaux des Sçavans*, that the biſhop of Normandy having endeavoured, toward the cloſe of the eleventh century, in a council, to aboliſh the marriages of prieſts, which were very frequent in thoſe times, they took up ſtones to ſtone him.

In the Grecian church the prieſts have always married, and continue to marry.

With reſpect to the Virgin Mary, there has been no council, though there have been many divines who wiſhed to make her *a fourth* perſon of *the Trinity*, as may be ſeen at length in Bayle, by ſearching the table of contents under the word *Vierge* (Virgin): I have not at preſent a good edition of this author's Dictionary, where this ſubject is ſtated, nor can I here inſert the words of theſe divines.

Such

Such are the explanations I ſend, in obedience to what your majeſty did me the honour to aſk. I have dwelt moſt on the firſt, becauſe I think clear proofs are neceſſary, when we wiſh to advance a ſyſtem which overthrows all received opinions, and which attempts no leſs than to demonſtrate that the Deity whom we adore was not thought to be a god, by thoſe who tranſmitted their religion to us, and whom we conſider as the fathers of this religion. A ſimple aſſertion is not enough for a fact of ſuch importance.

May Heaven grant your majeſty the length of days of Methuſelah, the power of David, and the riches of Solomon; for, with reſpect to wiſdom, you have a better doſe of it than he had: and concubines will never induce you to offer incenſe to St. Ignatius and to St. Chriſtopher, as they induced this ſo much vaunted king of Iſrael to offer to Baal, and to idols.

I am, with profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER

WRITTEN BY THE

MARCHIONES D'ARGENS

TO

FREDERIC II.

SIRE, Eguilles near Aix, March 19, 1771.

FOR theſe two months paſt, ſince the loſs of my huſband, I have been continually excited to aſſert on all occaſions, that he expired like a ſaint; when the truth requires I ſhould ſimply ſay he expired like a ſage. They have taken advantage of my grief to blind my reaſon, ſire, which was ſo far gone that I was obliged to do violence to myſelf to obey your majeſty's commands, which required me to relate the truth. This I have faithfully performed, but I fear leſt I ſhould have weakened the picture, by a mixture of colours foreign to the ſubject. The flambeau which enlightened me ſo well, I have loſt. From the light of your precious letter,

letter, ſire, have I recovered that fortitude which till then had forſaken me. Permit me to repair the wrong which expreſſions too cautious may have led me to commit toward the memory of my huſband.

Of him, ſire, I may ſay, with the ſplendor which truth demands, what your majeſty ſaid of general Goltz. Cato did not die with more fortitude, ſpeaking like Lucretius. His only alarm related to the arrival of his brother, of whom he was in expectation, that he might make his laſt arrangements with him; the vain terrors of another life he deſpiſed: in fine, he died like a true philoſopher.

I had the honour to inform your majeſty that he entertained himſelf during his ſickneſs with the works of the moſt illuſtrious philoſophers. The abbé, as a man of the church, often wiſhed to diſpute his principles; but politeneſs prevented him from being too obſtinate in diſcuſſion againſt a man much enfeebled; and for this reaſon, the abbé ſubmitted to diſcourſe which to him appeared but little orthodox.

I wrote to your majeſty that the fear of the effect which might have been produced on my huſband, by ſuch notice as ſhould lead him to think of death, was one of the motives which I alleged to prevent the abbé from approaching

his bed; but my huſband was not ignorant that his end was near, for he mentioned it to me daily. I did but employ every means in my power to prevent him from being wearied by ſuch kind of converſation. When I left him, he was unable to ſee, ſpeak, or hear.

Your majeſty muſt not be aſtoniſhed that the abbé, who was preſent when he departed, ſhould be there at the preciſe moment. He is a friend of the marquis's brother's, who lodged with the baroneſs on his way to Toulon, where he remained ſome weeks after we had departed. He watched this melancholy moment. What a country, ſire, is this! They told me, when the laſt remedy was adminiſtered to my dear marquis, that it was neceſſary to lower the vapours of his mind, and to ſave the ſoul though at the expence of the body. What a barbarous ſyſtem! But I had been determined by a hope more humane, and from this remedy waited his return to life.

I humbly aſk pardon for having again importuned your majeſty. Ridiculous ſcruples occaſioned me to ſpeak truth by halves in my firſt letter, and ſcruples better founded have dictated this ſecond, in which I thought it my duty to obey your majeſty more truly, and to render to my huſband that juſtice which is his due.

How were it poſſible not to waver, in a country where I have been told that the greateſt ſervice I could at preſent do, to my huſband, would be to burn all that remains of his works, and to ſet fire to ſome pictures which he had brought hither with him? as if the more things we burn in this world, the leſs ſhould we burn ourſelves in the next. Reading of your divine letters, ſire, has reſtored me to reaſon, and to an exact performance of my duty to your majeſty and my huſband. My grief had deprived me of that of which he was not robbed by the preſence of death. The two laſt bons mots which he uttered, even when his mind was unhinged, prove how firm he was in his opinions. He had formed the plan of a work which was not inferior to the ſtrongeſt things he had ſaid; on this he was occupied, at leaſt in fancy, during the whole courſe of his ſickneſs. But fate rendered his projects ineffectual. He is too happy if, being dead, the exact truth ſhould prove to your majeſty he was not unworthy of the bounties with which he has been honoured by you.

I am with moſt profound reſpect, &c.

End of the Correſpondence between FREDERIC II. *and the* MARQUIS D'ARGENS, *and of Volume the Tenth.*